

MPs call for new audit powers over Camelot

The auditing procedures for Camelot may be tightened after it was revealed the Auditor General did not have full access to relevant details.

Tyson: Feels betrayed by regulation King and is seeking everything to break his contract with the promoter and Offlot

FOOTBALL The National

Parliament by Sir

Purn. He stated: "I am required to attest to the adequacy of the Director General's procedures or his statement of Assurances. Moreover, since I do not have audit access to the Lottery Operator, Camelot, I cannot assess independently whether the Director General's procedures have sufficient regard to the risks and controls in the Camelot systems."

After the forced resignation of Peter Davis, MPs are de-

manding changes to make the lottery much more accountable. The powerful House of Commons Public Accounts Committee will be pressing the Government to increase Sir John's powers and give his office full access to all relevant details.

One committee member, Alan Williams, Labour MP for Swansea West, said: "This is a shortcoming we must address, and what is unfolding at the moment makes it important that we do so as soon as possible."

Whitehall sources indicate the idea would be favourably received. The sources also state that the Department of Culture Media and Sport is considering a number of options on the future of the US company GTech in the Camelot Consortium.

GTech owns 22.5 per cent stake in Camelot which had earned it more than £12m so far. It also has a contract for supplying the computers and the terminals at sales outlets which has to date gained the company payments totalling £6.62 million. That some goes not to GTech UK but straight to its offices in America.

One option being considered by the Government would be to keep the equipment contract with GTech, the removal of which could pose severe logistical problems in running the

game, but detach it from the consortium.

A Camelot spokeswoman said: "We shall of course do whatever the new Director General says, but we see no rea-

son why GTech should have to leave the consortium. They are the best".

The GTech boss Guy Snowden, who lost a libel action against Richard Branson and

since then resigned from the company's British arm, should not receive any direct financial benefit from the UK game, Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, had indicated.

ed. However, a GTech spokeswoman said Mr Snowden did not receive any dividend payments on his shares, so the only way he could benefit from them would be through selling them.



Happier days: The directors of Camelot when the lottery was launched in October 1993

Photograph: Craig Easton

A stitch in time: Brides ask surgeons to restore virginity

Doctors in The Netherlands are reconstructing the hymens of young women so they appear to be virgins when they marry.

The women, from immigrant communities, fear that if they cannot show a bloody sheet after their wedding night, their families will be ashamed

and they may risk violence and banishment.

However, the practice has drawn criticism from British colleagues who say it is unethical. Some say it involves "collusion with deceit" and that it "confirms sexual inequality", perpetuating the view that

promiscuity is acceptable only for men. Others say it should be regarded as cosmetic surgery.

Dr A Logmans, a consultant gynaecologist, and colleagues at the Daniel den Hoed clinic in Rotterdam, describe in the *British Medical Journal* how they repair the hymen by stitching to-

gether the scarred remnants. If necessary, they dissect a strip of tissue from the vagina to reconstruct the hymen. The procedure is carried out in outpatients and the patient has the right to have their medical notes destroyed.

A study of the first 20

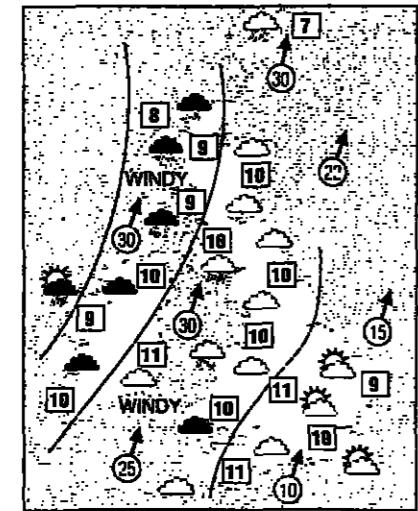
women, aged 16 to 23, who had the operation in 1993, showed none had any regrets. Half claimed they lost their virginity as a result of sexual abuse. All opted to destroy their notes.

In a *BMJ* commentary, Dr Sara Paterson-Brown, consultant gynaecologist at Queen Charlotte's

Hospital, London, says the operation is justifiable, "where women would otherwise suffer disgrace or worse." In Egypt the trade in hymen repairs has reduced "cleansing" murders by 80 per cent over 10 years, she says.

— Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

WEATHER



Atlantic chart, noon today

Noon today

Scotland and Northern Ireland will be wet and windy, with spells of heavy rain clearing to leave blustery showers towards evening, but eastern Scotland will at least start the day dry. Western parts of Wales and the south-west and north-west of England will be mostly cloudy and breezy with spells of drizzle, giving way to heavier rain by evening. The rest of England and Wales will be dry with sunny spells, but it will tend to cloud over from the west later. It will be a mild day everywhere.

Outlook for the next few days
On Saturday, rain will quickly clear the south-east of England, then all parts will have a bright and cold day with sunshine and blustery showers. Most of the showers will be in the north and west. Sunday will start bright and chilly in the south, but the north will see cloud and drizzle later. It will however start to become a little milder. The warming trend will continue on Monday with further rain in western Scotland but elsewhere it will be dry.

Air quality

Yesterday's readings

SO₂

Moderately Good

Good

Boys cleared of rape and assault of girl, 9, at school

Four boys have been cleared of raping and indecently assaulting a nine-year-old girl at their primary school. The case, says Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent, poses questions about how courts and the police should deal with children accused of such serious offences.

It was a terrible, harrowing story - a nine-year-old girl allegedly raped and sexually assaulted in the school lavatory by a gang of pupils aged from 9 to 11. But as the Old Bailey jury yesterday acquitted the last of the defendants, following a three-week trial, a national children's charity called for a change in the law to prevent such a trial ever being repeated.

New legislation has lowered the age at which children can be charged with rape to 10 and this case is believed to involve Britain's youngest ever defendants for that offence. Despite attempts to make Court 12 at the Old Bailey - the country's highest criminal court - more child-friendly with the use of crayons, video links and colouring books, it was condemned last night as "inappropriate".

Questions have also been asked as to whether the police and Crown prosecutors should

ever have brought the case in the first place when the conviction relied so heavily on the girl's testimony. The two boys, one aged 10 and one 11, were cleared yesterday of the sex attack on the girl, now aged 10, in the boys' lavatory at their school in west London in May last year.

On Tuesday two 10-year-olds were also acquitted of the rape charges on the direction of the judge. A third 10-year-old was cleared on the same day of

indecent assault. The judge said a police interviewer had asked leading and wholly improper questions of the defendant.

The girl had been raped and beaten by a group of men in her native Jamaica at the age of six before moving to Britain. She alleged that a group of five boys dragged her into lavatories at their school, forcibly stripped her, then took it in turns to rape her as the others looked on.

The headmistress of the pri-

mary school where the alleged attack took place had told the jury that one boy said the girl "wanted to do it". The girl was deeply affected by her experiences in Jamaica and had started a number of fires and told her mother that voices had made her do it. Before asking the jurors to retire, the judge had warned them: "In the light of her undoubtedly discrepancies in her account, her history of fantasies, her reputation at

school for telling untruths and blaming others, and her vulnerable, needy personality, I strongly advise you to exercise caution before acting on her evidence alone."

After the case the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, said: "The NSPCC believes that a formal adult court setting is an inappropriate place to deal with children, whether they are victims, defendants or witnesses.

Drama chief quits BBC as changes bring a life of misery

BBC spin doctors have gone into a tailspin over the comments of the Corporation's head of drama serials who is poised to quit over what he calls 'rampant commercialisation'. Rob Brown, Media Editor, reports.

If only the BBC could make a drama about its own drama department, whose perpetual internal tensions yet again exploded into public view yesterday.

The man credited with some of the corporation's finest creative successes is poised to quit. Michael Wearing, head of drama serials, who brought *Boys from the Blackstuff*, *Our Friends in the North* and *Pride and Prejudice* to our screens, along with *Common as Muck* and *House of Cards*, claims that it is "creatively impossible" to remain in post because "rampant commercialisation" has made his life "a misery".

His scathing comments instantly sent the drama department's spin doctors at Television Centre into a spin. They did everything in their power to limit the damage, claiming that Mr Wearing was annoyed because the new controller of BBC1, Peter Salmon, had refused to commission a project on which he was keen - an adaptation of a crime novel by Janet Neel.

Whilst acknowledging that he is the doyen of television drama, they pointed out that he is 59 and has lined up other work outside the corporation. They issued a terse statement: "Michael is due to retire next year and is obviously discussing his future plans outside the BBC, so he may have to go sooner rather than later."

BBC bosses are obviously starting to find Mr Wearing's outspokenness more than a bit wearing. "I think the most significant point to note is that his comments were made at a party," was the response from a spokesman who obviously doesn't



Last of the summer wine: The BBC's failure to commission a new series of *This Life*, above, caused a major row last year. Michael Wearing's credits include *Pride and Prejudice*, below, *House of Cards*, left, and *Common as Muck*.

need any lessons from Peter Mandelson in the black art of character assassination.

The Stage, the actors' trade paper, re-

ported Mr Wearing's comments which

were made at a recent party to celebrate

the British presence at the forthcoming

Banff International Television Festival in

Canada. But several other (apparently

very sober) leading television dramatists

were swift to echo his damning criticisms yesterday. Trevor Griffiths told *The Independent*: "Michael Wearing is in the great tradition of BBC drama producers. The thought that he's been driven out of the corporation by its new commercial ethos is appalling."

Mr Griffiths, it should be said, crossed

swords with BBC apparatchiks himself re-

cently when his drama commemorating the anniversary of Nye Bevan's birth was downgraded to a graveyard slot on BBC2. The legendary Labour politician was portrayed by Brian Cox, who was so incensed by the treatment of the film that he penned a powerful polemic for *The Independent on Sunday* denouncing the "dumbing down" of BBC drama.

Michael Wearing was given a special Bafta award last year in recognition of his outstanding creative contribution to television. Even the BBC spin doctors acknowledged yesterday that "he shows he makes cause waves and create talking points". They must be praying that one project he doesn't have in mind is a drama about the BBC drama department.

The philistinism of new Labour comes under savage attack from a Labour MP today, with Tony Blair depicted as the man who will be "tough on the arts, tough on the causes of arts". Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports a cry of dissent from the ranks.

Brian Sedgemore, MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch, will tell a Tate Gallery conference today that just as the Prime Minister believed in politics without conflict, he appeared to want art without subversion.

In a prepared text, he says: "New Labour wants art that is as pungent as processed cheese, as soul-searching as a conversation between Po, Laa-Laa, Dipsy and the other Teletubbies, as original as Dolly the Sheep. As part of the politics of contentment, new Labour wants colours that do not clash, textures that do not distort, and shapes which Cubists would not understand."

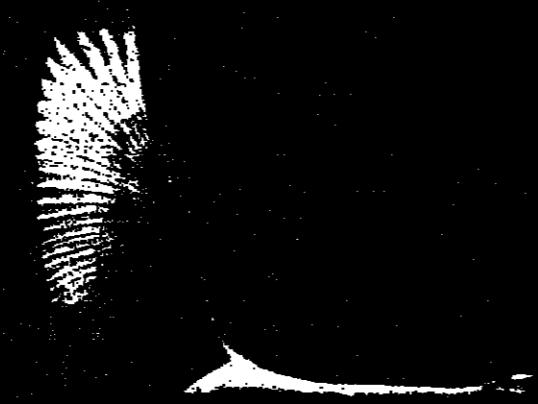
"Turner in, conceptual art out, should hereinafter be the slogan that hangs outside the Tate. And please keep that painting which depicts Stanley Spencer's aching balls away from Tony's children. Surely there are less traumatic ways to express impotent love."

Mr Sedgemore, who claims more artists per square metre live in Hackney than anywhere else in the world, says: "The threat to fine arts institutions is that deep down new Labour, notwithstanding its sensitive, cultured secretary of state, Chris Smith, is every bit as philistine as Old Toryism."

"It doesn't want sensations or palm prints of Myra Hindley or visual satire which mocks the most powerful image in Western Christendom. I somehow can't see Harriet Harman sending out Christmas cards which have the mother of Jesus in the background tilling the fields around Bethlehem, with the son of God being looked after by a child-minder in the foreground."

But Mr Sedgemore becomes even more savage when dealing with the *Stepford Wives* - "that's those female new Labour MPs who've had the chip inserted into their brain to keep them on message, and who collectively put down women and children in the vote on lone parents' benefits. Few of them have shown any interest in culture."

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Irvine forced into retreat over greater press controls

The Lord Chancellor was forced to retreat last night after his demand for new restraints on the press was dismissed as "censorship" by the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission. Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, reports on a row sparked by one of the Prime Minister's closest allies.

When Lord Irvine of Laird met an interviewer from the *New Statesman* earlier this week, his mood was bullish. He was "keeping up the pressure" on the Press Complaints Commission to introduce a system under which it could stop a newspaper from publishing a story unless it could prove a public interest, he said. In particular, such a system could have prevented revelation of Robin Cook's affair with Gaynor Regan.

But last night, after 24 hours of political bombardment from colleague and foe alike, his department issued a much more bland statement. "The Government has not reached a final view and is currently discussing all those issues with the Press Complaints Commission," it said, adding that ministers were committed to self-regulation by the press.

While Labour officials expressed irritation only in private Lord Wakeham, the Tory chairman of the commission, made his feelings very public. He wrote to both Lord Irvine and Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to attack the notion before renewing his assault in the House of Lords.

"Press censorship of this sort is unacceptable in a democratic society – a point I think you and government ministers



In retreat: Lord Irvine, whose demands for restraints on the press sparked controversy and were dismissed as 'censorship' Photograph: Nicola Kusz

recognise. It is certainly not a power the newspaper industry will ever give the PCC – rightly in my view," he wrote to Mr Smith. Such a system could only be used by public figures who had "something to hide," and in any case would be impossible to administer. It would only serve to bring newspapers into direct conflict with government.

Later, speaking in a debate on the Human Rights Bill, which incorporates the European Convention into British law, he said he feared the new legislation would threat-

en the existing system of self-regulation. It would make the PCC a statutory authority which could be ordered by the courts to exercise "prior restraint," he argued.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister's official spokesman, at a briefing in Washington, did not respond when asked if he believed the Lord Chancellor's comments had been ill-judged. "The Prime Minister's view very strongly is there will not be a privacy law by the front door or by the back door," he said.

William Hague, the Tory leader, was

quick to attack the Government on the issue. He claimed ministers were trying to suppress debate and that they believed "writing stories about Robin Cook's behaviour as Foreign Secretary should be against the law".

"Not content with a huge majority in the House of Commons the Government now seems to be arguing that they should not be subject to any scrutiny at all," he said in a speech to Tories in Neil Hamilton's former Tatton seat.

There was some support for Lord Irvine from Labour back benches, though. Dr Lewis Moonie, a former Labour spokesman on the media, said many MPs would support him.

"You cannot deal with invasion of privacy with a post-hoc measure – it has to be before the disclosure. In Robin Cook's case, the family were caused considerable distress by the disclosure of something that was personal and it was not of general public interest."

PUBLIC INTEREST OR INVASION OF PRIVACY?

Would a privacy law have prevented these stories from being published?

• Robert Maxwell's crooked business affairs. For years, journalists had toiled under legal threats from Maxwell to prove his empire was built on sand. In France, Maxwell used privacy laws to gag journalists. In Britain, word about his phone empire seeped out before he died.

• David Mellor's extra-marital affair with Antonia de Sancha in 1992 might have been regarded by some as an invasion of privacy. But press interest led to revelations that, as a minister, he had been on holidays paid for by Mona Bawwens, whose father was a Palestine Liberation Organisation paymaster. He subsequently resigned.

• A series of Conservative ministers and MPs resigned after the party adopted its Back to Basics policy and began preaching about family values.

• Environment minister Tim Yeo stood down after it was revealed in December 1993 that he had fathered a child by a Tory councillor.

• In January 1994, David Ashby resigned as a parliamentary private secretary after admitting sharing a hotel bed with a male friend.

• In February 1994, Hardie Booh resigned as a parliamentary private secretary as a result of a relationship with a Commons researcher.

• In 1995, Citizen's Charter minister, Robert Hughes, went after disclosure of an extra-marital affair, and Richard Spring resigned as a PPS after allegations of a three-in-a-bed romp.

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• Maybe beheading's the answer ... any volunteers? •

The Lord Chancellor has many enemies who would be delighted to see him fall out of favour. Steve Boggan looks at a controversial lawyer, who is one of the Prime Minister's closest confidantes

owing his threats of "no-win, no-fee" justice and promises to crack down on the use of Legal Aid.

Many of his political peers feel no better about him, reminding anyone who will listen that, although he is a member of eight of the 20 Cabinet committees – chairing three of them – he is unelected.

Derry Irvine was born in Ireland 57 years ago. He enjoyed a good education at grammar school and a lively intellectual home life, being exposed to his father's vibrant brand of socialism. He went on to study at Glasgow University before moving on to Cambridge, where he achieved a first. In 1970, he unsuccessfully contested Hendon North for Labour but picked himself up to establish one of the most successful chambers in the country, Lord Irvine of Laird.

They were spoken in 10 seconds yesterday by one of the most eminent criminal QC's in the country and, worse still, they were delivered with venom. Such is the relationship these days between Lord Irvine and many of his fellow barristers following his threats of "no-win, no-fee" justice and promises to crack down on the use of Legal Aid.

"Intellectually arrogant, ruthless, aggressive, self-opinionated and bombastic. That just about covers it." And the line goes dead.

These were the words of a man who makes a living choosing his words carefully, but they would appear to reflect the opinions of many in the legal profession when asked to describe the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Laird.

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Jailed woman is cleared of killing her aunt for legacy

A music teacher was freed at the Old Bailey yesterday after finally being cleared of murdering her aunt for her legacy. Sheila Bowler - whose daughter Jane wept in her arms outside court after the jury's unanimous verdict - had endured two full murder trials and more than four years in jail after she was accused of driving her 89-year-old aunt to the River Brue near Rye in East Sussex and pushing her in.

Mrs Bowler, 68, who had always protested her innocence, was convicted at Hove Crown Court in 1993 of murdering Florence Jackson. But the Court of Appeal quashed

the conviction and ordered a re-trial last year after new medical evidence emerged.

Mrs Bowler, from Rye, denied murdering Mrs Jackson in May 1992 while driving her from a residential home to her own house. The prosecution alleged that she had dragged Mrs Jackson from her car to the river. Her body was found the following day.

Anthony Glass QC, for the prosecution, alleged that Mrs Bowler killed Mrs Jackson on the journey then covered up her deed by pretending her aunt - who normally needed help to walk - must have made her way to the river and accidentally fallen in.

Mrs Bowler said she had left Mrs Jackson - known as Aunt Flo - in her car when she went to get help for a flat tyre. When she returned she had disappeared.

Jeremy Roberts QC, for the defence, said the prosecution "had not produced one shred of direct evidence to connect Mrs Bowler with whatever it was that happened to Mrs Jackson that night". He told the jury: "No witness claims to have seen Mrs Bowler or her car at the pumping station or in Station Road that night. There is no scientific evidence suggesting Mrs Bowler had ever been in that area."

Professor Archibald Young, an expert in geriatric behaviour, who was called as a defence witness, had told the jury that people of Mrs Jackson's age and condition could have walked the quarter-of-a-mile from the car to the river by themselves.

The court had heard that Mrs Jackson was the aunt of Mrs Bowler's late husband, and that her only asset was a flat in Rye which she was leaving to her niece. Mrs Bowler had power of attorney and was responsible for arranging payment of fees at Greyfriars, a residential nursing home at Winchelsea where Mrs Jackson lived. She

owed more than £3,000 in arrears and the flat would have to be sold.

Mr Glass alleged that she had a financial interest in Mrs Jackson's death, saying that every month Mrs Jackson lived, the value of Mrs Bowler's inheritance diminished. But Mrs Bowler said that she received £17,500 a year from teaching at private schools and pensions. The mortgage on her home was paid off and she had savings.

After the verdict Mrs Bowler said she felt vindicated. "I do not feel bitter, but I am very angry that I had been convicted [earlier] of this. I lost my faith in the jus-

tice system," she said, adding that her ordeal had been "a living nightmare".

The campaign to free her was led by Tim and Angel Devlin, whose daughters were contemporaries of Jane Bowler at school. Tim Devlin's father, Lord Devlin, played a part in the release of the Guildford Four.

Channel Four said yesterday that a special edition of *Trial and Error*, which investigated the Bowler case, will be broadcast on Monday, showing Mrs Bowler, her family and lawyers, as they prepared for - and during - the 17-day retrial.

Prison diary, page 15

Campaign to free the Pooh Five: a scandal that would rock Seven Acre Wood

He always considered himself a very ordinary sort of bear, but, as Ross Prince reports, the whereabouts of Pooh sparked an international dispute when an MP who found him languishing in New York Public Library called for his return.

Americans have responded angrily to demands by Labour backbencher Gwyneth Dunwoody that the original Winnie the Pooh and his friends Piglet, Eeyore, Tiger and Kanga be repatriated to their homeland.

After finding the dolls sitting forlornly in the New York Public Library, Mrs Dunwoody tabled a Commons question to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, asking him to get the dolls back.

She said: "Just like the Greeks want their Elgin Marbles back, so we want our Winnie the Pooh back, along with all his splendid friends."

But the Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, has vowed to keep the dolls in America. He broke off from his busy schedule yesterday to visit the exiled dolls at the West 53rd Street library. Accusing the Labour MPs of using "fightin' words", he said: "We will do anything we can to keep them here." Spokeswoman Colleen Roche added: "He just wanted to reassure the bear that he is safe on American soil."

There is speculation that Pooh's plight may even be raised at today's meetings be-



The original Winnie the Pooh toys, which were donated to the New York Public Library in 1987. Gwyneth Dunwoody MP is working to arrange their return to Britain. Left, US media reaction to the demand. Photograph: Reuters

tween the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and President Bill Clinton. A spokesperson for the White House said: "We do not expect this to be on the formal agenda of the meeting between President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair although we would not exclude that it could come up in discussions."

The bear that would become Winnie the Pooh was bought from Harrods by author A A Milne in the early 1920s for his son, Christopher Robin. The other dolls joined Pooh over the years, although Kanga's baby, Roo, was lost by Christopher Robin in a Surrey apple orchard and the whereabouts of Wol the owl is unclear.

The dolls became models for artist Ernest H Shepard, whose beautiful line

drawings accompany the *Winnie the Pooh* books.

In 1947, Milne's American publisher spied the dolls in the corner of the author's living room and asked if he could take them

on a promotional tour of the US. The Pooh Five never saw England again.

The dolls were donated to the New York Public Library in 1987 and have been kept in a bullet-proof display case ever

since. They are seen by 750,000 visitors each year.

Ms Dunwoody said she was unfazed by the tough talk of the famously hard-line Mayor Giuliani. "I am happy to do battle

not in some stuffy glass case in New York."

ADVANCE PREVIEWS NATIONWIDE THIS SUNDAY

Kevin Kline



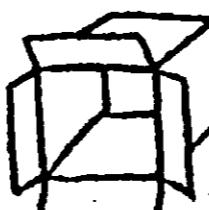
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Housing young people at risk

Four goals for healthier Britain could save 15,000 lives

Four targets for creating a healthier Britain were set out yesterday by the Government. But there are none to reduce the health gap between rich and poor, says Jeremy Lauance, Health Editor.

A total of 15,000 lives will be saved in 2010 if the national targets for reductions in deaths from heart disease, cancer and suicide set out by the Government yesterday are achieved.

The goals, published in a Green Paper, *Our Healthier Nation*, represent a 17 per cent cut in the 90,000 deaths a year that now occur among the under-65s, the target group. But this is more modest than expected, reflecting the difficulty ministers see in changing individual habits, social pressures and environmental influences. A fourth target is to



total visit from 10 million to eight million a year.

The Green Paper sets out the Government's plans for replacing the Tories' Health of the

Nation strategy, launched in 1992. That set 27 targets for improving health and although a majority have been or are about to be achieved, some will be

badly missed including those on obesity, teenage pregnancy and teenage smoking.

Ministers say that by reducing the targets to four, efforts can

be concentrated where they matter most. "If everything is to be a priority then nothing will be a priority," the document says.

There is no goal set for teenage pregnancies, a subject that Tess Jowell, the public health minister, has signalled as among the most important indicators of social disadvantage.

Excess: Previous guidelines on obesity may be badly missed in the new Green Paper on creating a healthier nation

Photograph: Philip Meech

HEALTH TARGETS

- Heart disease/stroke – reduce the death-rate among people under 65 by a third by 2010, saving 8,500 lives a year.
- Accidents – reduce accidents in the home, on the roads and at work by a fifth by 2010, averting 2 million accidents a year.
- Cancer – reduce the death-rate from all cancers among people under 65 by a fifth by 2010, saving 6,000 lives a year.
- Mental health – reduce the death-rate from suicide and undetermined injury by a sixth by 2010, saving 800 lives a year.

Four sentences in the 90-page document explain that because pregnancy rates vary so widely around the country, targets should be set locally "where appropriate". Teenage pregnancy is to have a separate strategy.

No national aim is set for reducing health inequalities and discussion of the problem is confined to three paragraphs. The Tories' Health of the Nation strategy, which was attacked for failing to make the link between poverty and ill-health, is criticised here for its "limited vision" and its "reluctance to acknowledge the social, economic and environmental causes of ill health".

There is also no target set for reducing smoking, which is to be the subject of a separate White Paper in the spring.

The Green Paper acknowledges the influence of poverty, education, employment, transport and social services on health but insists that the Government cannot do everything. It rejects "individual victim blaming" and "nanny state social engineering" and says there is a third way – a national contract of better health. This involves a partnership between government, local communities and individuals with twin goals: to improve the health of the population as a whole and to improve the health of the worst off to narrow the health gap.

The task of tackling the health gap will fall to local health authorities which will be required to establish health improvement programmes focused on neighbourhoods or groups which suffer the worst health. However, ministers are waiting for the independent in-

quiry into health inequalities, chaired by Sir Donald Acheson, which is due to report in the spring, before deciding whether to include national targets.

The absence of targets for reducing health inequalities drew the strongest criticism from health organisations last night. Karen Caines, director of the Institute of Health Services Management said: "[Ministers] have peered over the precipice and drawn back a step or two. On this most crucial issue they have bottled out. Without measurable targets, even over a long timescale there will be less pressure for change."

Rabbi Julia Neuberger, chief executive of the Kings Fund, the health policy think tank, said: "We do have to measure progress in reducing inequalities, otherwise there is a danger that no one will take responsibility and be held to account".

Ministers say that the four national target areas of heart disease, cancer, mental health and accidents are all conditions which affect the poor more than the rich and measures to achieve them should therefore benefit the former proportionately more.

Responses to the Green Paper are invited up to 30 April.

A shot in the arm for campaign trail

It is more than 20 years since the Government recognised that health could not be guaranteed by a health service. Diet and smoking, as well as Government policy in areas such as employment, housing and education had a greater impact than anything the NHS could achieve.

Over the past two decades repeated attempts have been made to improve public health and the difficulty of doing so is reflected in the uncanny resemblance between yesterday's Green Paper and those of the past.

In 1976, the then Department of Health and Social Security published *Prevention and Health: Everybody's Business* which highlighted what individuals could do to protect themselves from what were then known as "diseases of affluence" – heart disease and cancer.

It was followed by health campaigns in the Eighties, such as *Look after your Heart* launched by the Health Education Council, which today would be regarded as nannyish. The Health of the Nation strat-

egy launched by the Tory government in 1992 marked the most sophisticated development of this approach.

Its key weakness was its failure to acknowledge the link between ill health and poverty. But although yesterday's Green Paper makes that link it is notably cautious about how far the health gap between the rich and the poor can be narrowed.

Caution is advisable. The lesson of the past 20 years is that improvements in public health, while desirable, are extraordinarily hard to achieve. Some campaigns, such as on drug-taking and Aids, in the Eighties, have made matters worse.

Julian Le Grand, professor of health policy at the London School of Economics, said: "Given that public health is such a difficult and diffuse area and given our ignorance about what works and what doesn't I think the most we can hope for is small incremental steps. The only things we know work are locally targeted programmes." — Jeremy Lauance

DAILY POEM

From *Late*

By Michael Hamburger

*A whole month of half-light, January, before
A day, the last, breaks bright,
And the night sky, too, is lit
By a half-moon unobscured.
Clear evening star.*

*Cock-crow again
Millennials sounds,
Blends with the softer calls
Of wood-pigeon, collared dove,
The long indigenous
And the recently settled.*

*Suddenly
The aconites clenched
Under snow, in the half-light,
Though the chill persists,
Tiny suns, respond
To the sun above,
Open their petals, shine.*

Today's poem comes from the latest sequence by the poet and translator Michael Hamburger, born in Berlin in 1924, who came to Britain in 1933 and now lives in Suffolk. His many awards include the OBE and the Goethe Medal. *Late* is published by Anvil Press (£7.95).

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The £50,000 bill to keep paedophile safe in a cell

The cost to the public of keeping the paedophile killer Robert Oliver in a police cell in Sussex has exceeded £50,000. Ian Burrell reports on the dilemma of coping with such offenders.

Sex-offender treatment centres are refusing to take responsibility for Oliver, the killer of Jason Swift, who has been living in a police cell for four months.

The public cost of looking after Oliver, who was hounded from town to town and sought refuge with the police in fear of revenge attacks by the public, has topped £50,000.

Officers from Sussex police, which is paying £400 a day from its budget for Oliver's keep, have been negotiating with various institutions to take the paedophile into their care. But none has been prepared to take the risk.

Last night Ray Wyre, one of Britain's leading consultants on sexual crime, said it would be "political suicide" for any sex-offender programme to agree to take Oliver on.

"Nearly all the organisations I am in contact with have been approached to have him," he said. "But the trouble is that the media are going to pursue him and these projects cannot afford the politics of it."

He added: "They have probably had to reassure the local community that the people they are working with are not too high-risk."

Mr Wyre said Oliver was part of a wider problem which involved more than 100 paedophiles who were convicted before 1991 and so are not

covered by the National Paedophile Register. Many of them are now being released back into the community without supervision. Mr Wyre said the answer was to create long-term secure establishments which were something between a hospital and a prison.

Oliver, who was jailed in 1989 after being convicted of the murder of 14-year-old Jason, throttled and gang-raped in a flat in east London, first turned himself into police last October. He had been released a month earlier after serving most of a 15-year sentence but had been driven out of accommodation in Dublin, Swindon, London, Liverpool and Manchester.

He remains in the police station 24 hours a day and during the past four months has introduced some "home comforts" to his cell, where he is said by police to be happy.

At the new year Oliver agreed he would be prepared to move to a secure hospital and undergo psychiatric treatment. But no institution will have him.

Sussex police said: "We are trying to find accommodation that would be most suitable to him and, yes, it is proving difficult. We are not looking just in Sussex and we continue to seek a solution." The problem over Oliver coincides with growing concern over treatment for paedophiles in jails.

All sex offenders sentenced to more than two years are supposed to undergo a sex-offender treatment programme, which is available in more than 15 jails and is advanced compared to such services in other countries. But many serious offenders are being kept in jails where no such treatment is available.

Monsoon guru finds he's fashionable on the Stock Market



Rags to riches: Peter Simon, below right, the founder of the chain which sells clothing inspired by the styles and colours of the Far East

Photograph: Rui Xavier

'The image is in brown rice and cheesecloth ... Some doubt it can still be successful'

Peter Simon, the founder of Monsoon, found himself £88m better off yesterday when a quarter of his company was floated on the Stock Market. Tamsin Blanchard analyses the appeal of the fashion chain which epitomises ethnic chic.

It all started on a trip to India in the early Seventies. Peter Simon, a former fishmonger salesman, purchased some locally made garments, and brought them back to London to sell from his Portobello Road market stall.

The first Monsoon store opened in 1973 in London's Beauchamp Place, and since then Mr Simon has opened 179 Monsoon and Accessorize shops. Combining mod-

ern design expertise with traditional materials and techniques, the company has traditionally sold a range of colourful handprinted cotton clothing and other natural fabrics. One of the first best sellers was a shaggy coat made from the wool of a sheep - a cross between a sheep and a goat.

Indeed, the shops have a loyal customer base. According to a company spokeswoman, she is typically aged between 25 and 45. "She is a customer who is not a slave to fashion, who loves the colour and the individual look of Monsoon clothes. However ... we feel that we are increasingly able to attract the customer who wants a stronger, simpler, more fashionable look."

Monsoon? It's for middle aged women who were once hippies," was one fashion editor's response when asked for an opinion on the chain yesterday. "Women don't want to look frumpy. Everything is shaped like a tent. The colours are wrong and the shapes aren't right," was another comment.

The snooty fashion cognoscenti however, have never been the core customer for Monsoon. A 32-year-old social worker,

Anne Maher, pops into her local branch from time to time to see what's new. Her most recent purchase was a necklace from Monsoon's sister chain, Accessorize. It was £8.99, what Ms Maher describes as "cheap and cheerful".

But Monsoon has an image firmly rooted in the brown-rice eating, cheesecloth wearing days of the Seventies. Some people doubt whether it can be successful in today's minimalist fashion climate.

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Monsoon is in a very strong position to move forward. As the merchandise in high street chains becomes increasingly interchangeable, it is Monsoon's very difference from the rest of the high street that the company should be exploiting.

Monsoon flotation, page 21



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BRI GA

Silicone breasts 'are safe'

Silicone breast implants do not damage the immune system and do not cause connective-tissue disease among women who have them, according to the latest study of one of the most vexed issues in medicine.

No good evidence has been produced that implants cause such problems, the *British Medical Journal* says, yet US manufacturers have paid \$4bn (£2.48bn) to women with them and in Britain the Department of Health has set up an inquiry, due to report in spring.

The new study found that the incidence of immunological disorders in 7,000 Swedish women with implants was no higher than in 3,000 women who had had surgery to reduce the size of their breasts.

In an editorial the *BMJ* says the results add weight to the conclusion that implants are safe, although they are associated with less serious problems such as hardening and occasional rupture.

"It is difficult to see how epidemiological studies will shed more light on this," it says.

In a letter to the journal, three plastic surgeons question the granting of legal aid to a woman with silicone implants who claims they are to blame for her child's stomach cramps, skin problems and food allergies after breast-feeding.

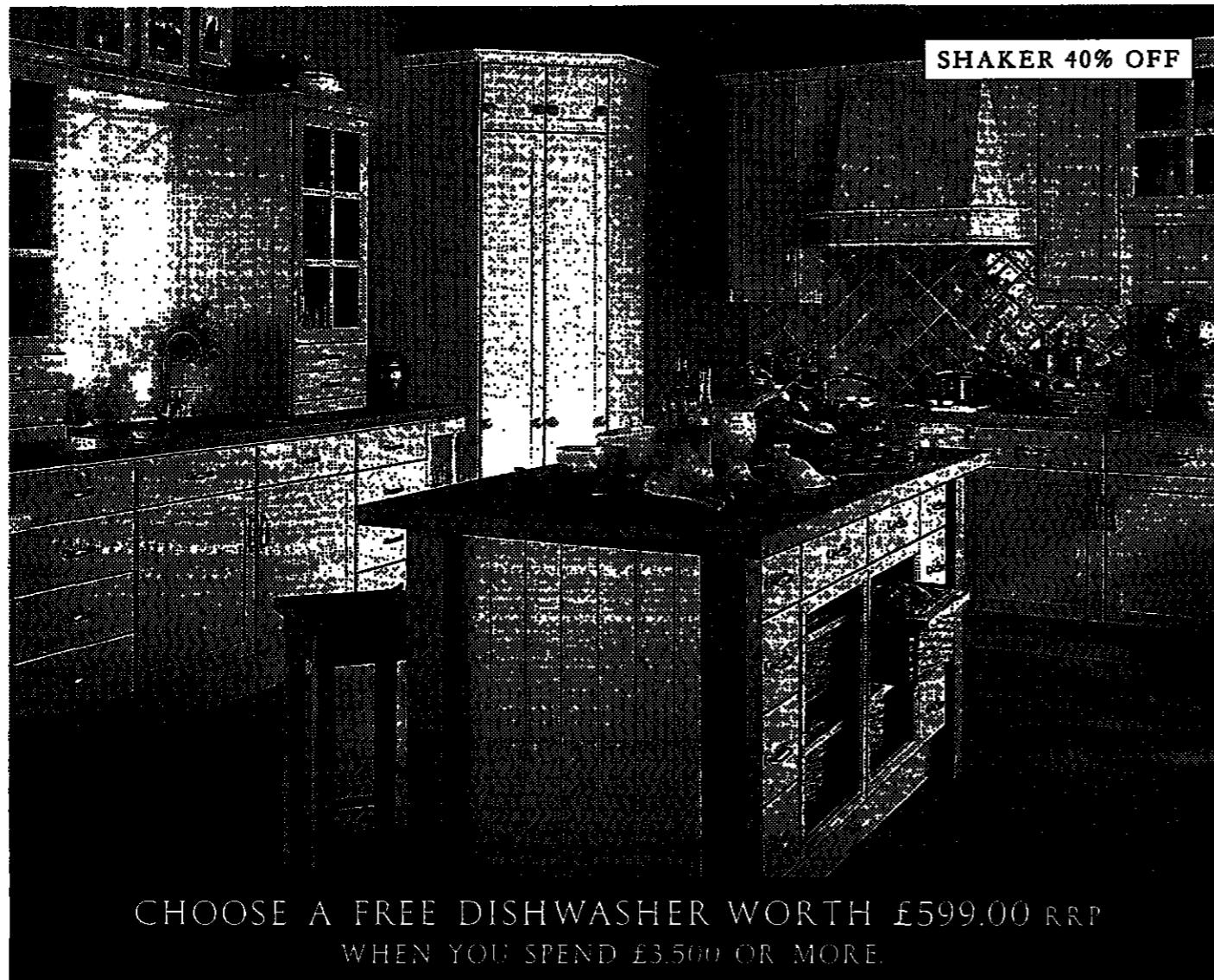
The authors say silicone is used for teats for infant bottles and is a constituent of baby-milk formula.

— Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor



Bang-on: The Duke of Windsor shooting (left) and the trousers he was wearing (centre) on display in New York, some of the items from the Duke and Duchess's Paris home to be auctioned by Sotheby's. Photograph: Reuters

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TND 19

Praise, not marks out of ten, seen as the key to school success

Teachers should stop routinely giving children marks or grades, London University experts said yesterday. Judith Judd, Education Editor, looks at startling new evidence on the best way to raise standards.

could improve and what they need to learn next could raise standards by as much as two GCSE grades in each subject over the country.

Professor Paul Black, one of the researchers and architect of the proposals for the first national tests 10 years ago, said the present government tests, targets and league tables might be counter-productive.

Tests and targets do not in themselves raise standards, the study argues and ministers need to focus on how children are assessed in the classroom. Dr Dylan William, head of the King's College school of education, denied their views meant a return to the progressive notions of the sixties.

Teachers would find it harder to give pupils a clear idea of how they could improve than to tick a pile of books.

They were not against national tests or giving pupils marks or grades once a term or once a year.

"But the place of marks needs to change. Too much emphasis on marks means pupils who are finding it difficult tend to give up."

The effect on able students could be equally unhelpful, he said.

Because they nearly always received high marks, they sometimes coasted. "I once gave the

Explanations of how pupils

Advisers cross swords on a class improvement act

Inspectors yesterday described Birmingham local education authority, a testbed for many Government policies, as "a success story". But, says Judith Judd, Education Editor, the report from the Office for Standards in Education highlights a dispute between two senior government advisers on how to improve schools.

philosophy" between the report and the authority about how schools improve. The report from Ofsted, headed by Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools, says higher standards have more to do with Prof Brighouse's leadership than the authority's school-improvement policies. The two men are joint vice-chairmen of the Government's Standards Task Force.

While Prof Brighouse believes that Birmingham's success offers hope for all inner-city areas, the report argues that the city's approach does not provide a model for others, partly because of the chief education officer's inspirational leadership.

Prof Brighouse thinks that bad schools should be dealt with quietly and discreetly, whereas the report appears to support the Government's policy of "naming and shaming" schools.

"It argues that the city "will need to be more open about confronting failure."

Prof Brighouse cites the authority's policy of setting targets for improvement as "a key ingredient" in its success. The report says the policy has little to do with success, because schools did not really understand how the targets worked.

Prof Brighouse said: "This is a really good report and it offers hope for urban areas. Whatever the odds, you can have tremendous rates of improvement if there is political will and good management."

There is a wider debate about school improvement and there is a conflict of philosophy. It boils down to what is the right mixture of pressure and support for schools."

The report points out that, despite improvements, Birmingham's position in the national league tables remains low – 96 out of 131 at GCSE. It suggests that the authority needs to concentrate on the things it does well and that it may have embarked on too many initiatives.

Inspectors criticise the local authority's policy of asking schools to set targets to improve on their previous best. "Some schools ... were celebrating progress that was at best modest and, very occasionally, entirely spurious."

One school hailed an improvement in its prospectus of almost 50 per cent in its GCSE results. This was an increase from 11.5 per cent, getting five or more top grades to 16 per cent, a difference of just nine pupils.

Calls to check prisoners for mental illness

Almost half the inmates who commit suicide have a known previous history of psychiatric illness, according to a report published today.

The study says that jailing mentally disordered offenders can worsen some conditions and prevent people from being properly treated. It describes locking up psychiatrically disturbed people as "inhumane".

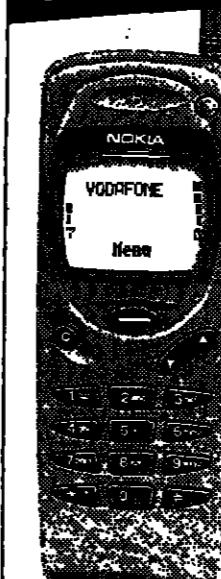
The Penal Affairs Consortium, which represents 34 organisations concerned with the prison system, also calls for facilities to be set up at courts and police stations to test whether offenders are mentally ill.

The report, *An Unsuitable Place for Treatment*, says that 47 per cent or 28 of the 60 inmates who killed themselves in prisons in England and Wales in 1995/96 had a known previous psychiatric history. Last year, a record 70 inmates committed suicide in prisons in England and Wales.

The report recommends the setting up of specialist facilities to deal with mentally disordered offenders and defendants.

— Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

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Cook seeks Gulf states backing for action against Saddam

Robin Cook tried yesterday to persuade leaders in the Gulf to back tough action against Saddam Hussein. Steve Cowshaw in Riyadh says he achieved some success after Saudi Arabia warned of dire consequences if Baghdad blocks UN inspectors' access to suspected chemical weapons sites.

The Foreign Secretary signalled that Britain's determination to embark on military action if necessary would not be deflected easily. "Saddam Hussein should not underestimate our resolve," Mr Cook said after talks with the Saudi Foreign Minister, Prince Saud. Mr Cook's talks in Saudi Arabia and later yesterday Kuwait - where he met the Emir of Kuwait - followed hard on the heels of a similar visit by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, whose message he had come to repeat and reinforce. "I am not in competition with Madeleine," he said.

In Baghdad, however, in what appeared a move to encourage Arabs to stiffen opposition to threatened air strikes, the Iraqi leader announced that all Arab prisoners would be freed "no matter what the crime". The number of prisoners and their nationalities was not immediately known, though it would presumably include all remaining Kuwaiti prisoners from the Gulf War. Kuwait says hundreds of its citizens are still missing from Iraq's 1990 invasion and seven-month occupation of the emirate.

The Saudis until now have been cautious



about the impact of air strikes. As the Saudi daily, *Arab News*, noted yesterday: "The danger is that US-led military action could give the Iraqi leader the kind of victory he is looking for. Let one bomb miss its target and kill civilians and the regime will have a propaganda coup with television pictures of the victims." But Mr Cook argued that the use of military force would damage the

Iraqi leader. "Saddam Hussein should not be under any illusions. If there is military action, it will be serious military action - and he will be hit hard ... he therefore has more interest than anybody else in finding a diplomatic solution. He should do so while he still has time."

The Saudis came closer than ever before to supporting possible military action. The

statement from the foreign ministry said the Iraqi regime would bear responsibility for the "dire consequences" if there was a "failure to reach a diplomatic solution".

Most dramatically, the Saudis warned of the potential break-up of Iraq if President Saddam refuses to compromise. They insisted on the need for "unconditional compliance" with United Nations Security Council resolutions and argued that the

UN resolutions constituted "the only way to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and preserve Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity". That is as much a fear as a threat. Saudi Arabia sees the break-up of Iraq as a nightmare scenario, with implications for stability throughout the region.

Mr Cook described the latest Iraqi pro-

posals for ending the crisis as "interesting", but he insisted that they did not go far enough. In talks with the Russian special envoy to Baghdad, the Iraqis have suggested that UN inspectors will be allowed to visit 45 requested sites. But the terms of the offer remain unclear - for example, whether the visits would only be a one-off, and who would carry out the inspections.

Mr Cook said any proposals would have to be in writing. "There's a long way to go yet. United Nations inspectors must be free to carry out their inspections without conditions, and no sites labelled as out of bounds." The Foreign Secretary spoke for half-an-hour on the telephone to his Russian opposite number, Yevgeny Primakov, about Moscow's attempts to broker a deal with Baghdad. Mr Primakov's main message was: "Give me time."

Boris Yeltsin said yesterday that the worst was over in the Iraq crisis, though he repeated his warning, made on Wednesday, that a US military strike could lead to a world war.

The Saudis and Kuwaitis argue that they know better than most about the arsenal of terror, as documented by the UN inspection team. Britain is working on the tabling next week of a United Nations Security Council resolution, as a final non-military ratcheting up of the pressure on Iraq.

France to stay out of military action

France, one of the fighting allies in the 1991 Gulf War, made it clear yesterday that it would take no part in any new military action against Baghdad.

Hubert Védrine, the French foreign minister, told French radio that Paris would disassociate itself from any punitive air raids on Iraq undertaken by the US and Britain. It would not even contemplate offering "logistical" help.

This hard line is supported across the political spectrum in France, from the pro-Saddam, far-right National Front to the instinctively anti-American Communists and Greens. The only dissenting voice has been the former Socialist prime minister, Michel Rocard, who said, in effect, that France was letting its allies down.

Why is France so sympathetic to Iraq? In part, Paris remains determined to build an alternative French, or if possible, European policy towards the Middle East. To maintain credibility with Arab capitals, it feels the need to distinguish itself from the US approach.

There is, undoubtedly, an element of commercial calculation. French firms have been

active in lining up possible contracts with Baghdad, once the UN embargo has been lifted.

But French politicians and officials are genuinely puzzled by the confrontational approach of the US, which they see as counter-productive. It is clear that the US will not allow normal relations with Iraq while Saddam Hussein is in power, French officials say. This removes any incentive for President Saddam to co-operate; it inevitably means that the US, and the UN, are placed in a relationship of verbal punch and counter-punch, leading eventually to fruitless military action.

If Iraq is bombed again, they argue, it will strengthen President Saddam. The Secretary-General of the French foreign ministry, Bertrand Dufourcq, was in Baghdad yesterday trying to find a diplomatic settlement acceptable to both Baghdad and the US. French officials say they believe that Iraq is shifting its ground, but they accept that President Saddam must acknowledge the fundamental principle of free access to all possible arms sites for inspectors of the UN's choice.

— John Lichfield, Paris

Dont spoil Olympics, says Japan

The Japanese government plans to ask the United States and Iraq to observe a United Nations-backed "Olympic truce" during the Nagano Winter Olympic Games which start tomorrow, its Foreign Ministry said.

Earlier this week, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called on all UN member nations to observe a truce during the Olympics. The White House said this week it was aware that any attack on Iraq during the Games would break the traditional Olympic truce, but said the United States government must make its own decisions.

China lines up with the Kremlin

China has warned the United States that it opposes military action against Iraq.

Qian Qichen, the foreign minister, yesterday telephoned Madeleine Albright, his US counterpart, and told her: "China does not favour the use of force against Iraq." He added that Peking was "quite uneasy" about the "increasingly deteriorating" situation with Iraq over weapons inspection.

Speaking on Chinese television yesterday, Mr Qian said: "China is extremely and definitely opposed to the use of military force because its use will result in ... casualties and create more turmoil in the region and even could cause new conflicts."

China is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council with the power of veto. In 1990 Peking abstained in the vote over military action against Saddam Hussein.

Mr Qian told Mrs Albright: "The Chinese side hopes that

the parties concerned would adopt restraint... and continue seeking the settlement of differences through dialogues."

Peking has also made it clear to Baghdad that Iraq must comply with UN resolutions requiring unlimited access to suspected weapons sites. China yesterday said it had sent a letter to Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, demanding that Baghdad co-operate with UN inspectors.

Mr Qian is trying to co-ordinate China's position with Russia, whose deputy foreign minister is in Peking for talks today. A spokesman for the Russian embassy in Peking said: "Our views coincide... [on Iraq]. We want a peaceful solution."

Peking has made no secret of wanting to re-establish trade links with Baghdad. In 1996 China announced it was holding talks with Iraq to sign what it described as "massive" oil exploration contracts.

— Teresa Poole, Peking

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Small cheer: The Prince of Wales and Arthur C Clarke. The accusations have cast a pall over the visit by the Prince, who leaves Sri Lanka today for Nepal



Photographs: Rex Features

Germany's jobless rate rises to 4.8m

On the day the unemployment rate hit a new post-war record in Germany, a jobless rally in Cologne, an industrial city of a million people, mustered 300 participants. More than 200 towns and cities were to be flooded by protesters inspired by the French movement. In the end, most were cancelled, owing to lack of interest.

"It's more difficult to organise anything here than in France," said Dietmar Koplow, who worked in a tractor factory until he was laid off last April. "Political consciousness in Germany is too feeble, and the unemployed are a bit shy."

The unions behind the day of action, to be repeated once a month until election day in September, had better luck in Berlin, where 3,000 noisy supporters besieged the local job centre. In Frankfurt, 400 people staged an occupation at the

local welfare office. But crowds elsewhere were small and docile, as in Cologne, where most of the participants were leftist students anxious to hurry home from the cold. They circled the building once, set fire to an effigy, and dispersed.

In many towns, notably in Bonn, where the opposition and government clashed over the issue of unemployment, no one would volunteer to go out into the streets. From the organisers' point of view, things can only get better. Perhaps people will take notice when the magic figure of 5 million is breached, possibly next month.

With 302,000 more jobless in January than in the previous month, the headline unemployment figure stood yesterday at 4.82 million. The latest statistics also show the gap between east and west is widening.

— Imre Karacs, Cologne

Clarke hits back at press claims of paedophilia

Arthur C Clarke's knighthood is on hold owing to accusations of paedophilia. But Peter Popham in Colombo says the furore has only mystified people in Sri Lanka, where he is greatly revered.

After stone-walling the British royal press pack all week, Clarke, the visionary science-fiction writer and alleged paedophile, turned up at the state banquet thrown for the Prince of Wales in Colombo last night and treated the invited guests to a persuasive exhibition of good spirits. "This is not Arthur Clarke, it's a clone," he told them when they cornered him sipping orange juice in a reception room in the President's house before the dinner.

"You know I can't say anything to you bastards - I am taking legal advice." He then declaimed the lines of verse by Humbert Wolfe: "I cannot hope to bribe or twist the British journalist but seeing what the man will do unbrinded, there's no occasion to."

Asked about his investiture as knight, he said: "I am anxious to get the thing done as soon as possible." He recollects a previous meeting with the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1985, at the premiere of the film *2010*. Earlier Clarke had issued a press release repeating his denial of allegations last week by the *Sunday Mirror*. "Having always had a particular dislike to paedophiles, few charges can be more revolting to me than to be classed as one," it ran.

"As I have already said, the allegations are wholly denied. Indeed, the circumstances are such nonsense that I have found it difficult to treat them with the contempt they deserve. My conscience is perfectly clear."

Before the banquet he shook hands and exchanged pleasantries with Prince Charles. The Prince leaves Sri

Lanka today for Nepal, the next leg of his South Asian tour. There is speculation that he might find a quiet moment at Westminster House, the British High Commissioner's residence, to dub the writer before he departs. The Clarke saga has thrown a pall over the first week of the Prince's tour. In his novel *Rendezvous With Rama*, set in 2130, Clarke wrote: "It was a mild nuisance having two 'Sirs' on one small committee: in these latter days, knighthood was an honour which few Englishmen escaped."

But when announced in the New Year's Honours List, Clarke's knighthood seemed richly deserved after a lifetime of distinction in science, as well as science fiction. For honour to be tarnished, or even aborted, by allegations which many Sri Lankans found incredible, seemed all wrong.

According to the *Sunday Mirror*, Clarke was said to have admitted to having sex with boys who had reached the age of puberty. It was also stated that he played table-tennis with schoolboys "at a notorious pick-up haunt for perverts called The Otters Aquatic Club".

It is true that Clarke regularly goes to the Otters Club, but this description caused particular outrage in Colombo, as the club is a byword for middle-class respectability. Scepticism about the allegations increased during the week, not least because the writer responsible, Graham Johnson, was allegedly sacked from the *News of the World* for fabricating an encounter with the Beast of Bodmin.

In Sri Lanka, Clarke's reputation remains almost entirely intact. The *Mirror* story was reported only on one radio programme. Newspapers have carried nothing about the allegations. In the *Lanka Monthly Digest's Golden Jubilee Special* on the "Fifty greatest Sri Lankans since independence," "Sir Arthur C Clarke," as he is styled, is the only foreign-born resident to be featured.

German MPs huff and puff, and stub out smoking Bill

The German parliament yesterday rejected a Bill that would have placed strict limits on smoking in public buildings and the workplace.

After a heated two-hour debate, the Bundestag voted by 336-256 against the measure, which would have banned smoking in public buildings and public transportation. It would have also required companies to set up separate rooms for smokers.

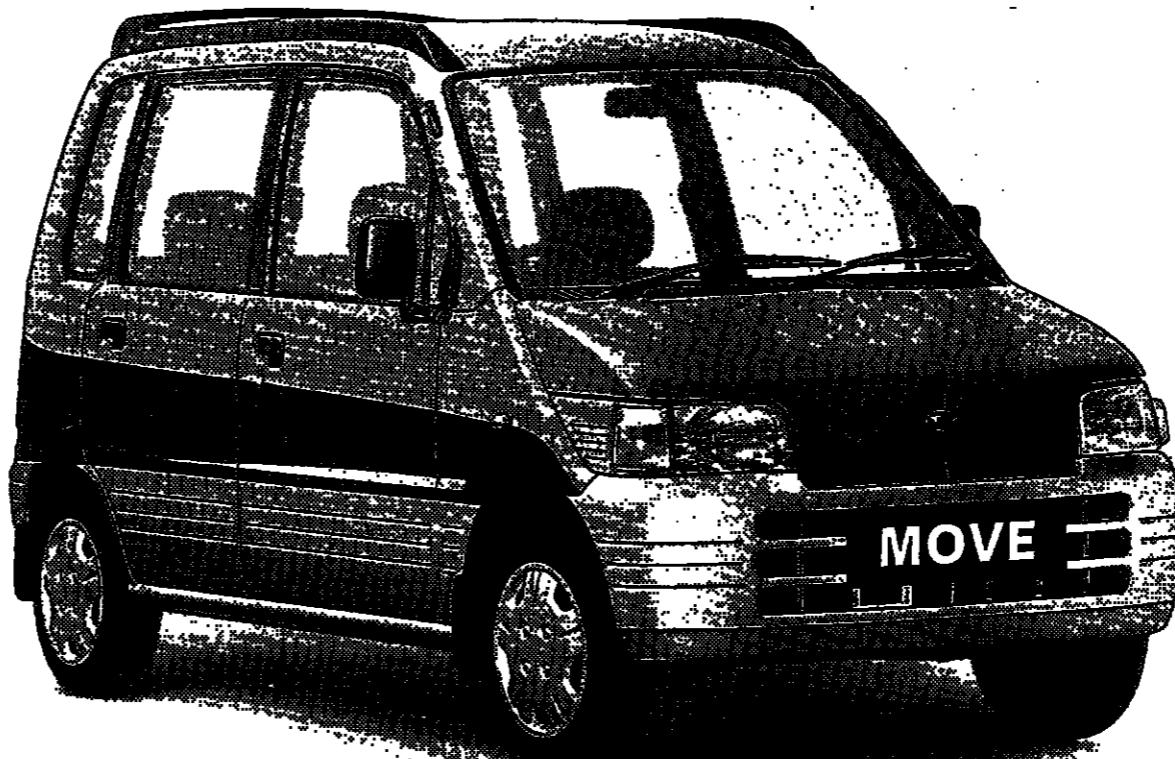
— Reuters, Bonn

Little Mermaid charge

Michael Poulsen, a TV cameraman, was detained for 13 days pending investigations into charges that he decapitated Copenhagen's Little Mermaid statue. He was charged with causing malicious damage to public property. He was first to film the statue after it was vandalised a month ago. He pleaded not guilty and lodged an appeal against the ruling. Police said they suspected he carried out the beheading with the help of unknown accomplices.

— Reuters, Copenhagen

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Ancestors of the tin snail crawl out from a French barn and go on display

Like rediscovered dinosaurs from an automotive Lost World, three ancestors of the Citroën Deux Chevaux, mislaid for nearly 60 years, will go on show in Paris today.

The cars, complete with the corrugated bonnets and flimsy deckchair seats are the first pre-production models of one of the great icons of post-war France.

They were built in 1938, 10 years before the cheap, low-powered French answer to the Volkswagen Beetle - *Tres Petite Voiture* - reached the public. When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the cars were hidden under bales of straw in a barn near Chartres to prevent the technology falling into enemy hands. (It may seem unlikely that the Wehrmacht would have coveted the *Deux Chevaux*, but it was classified as top secret at the time).

Three years ago the cars were unearthed, filthy, their bonnets stoved in by the weight

of the bales, but intact. They will be the *pièces de résistance* at *Retromobile*, a 10-day exhibition of classic French and foreign cars which opens today at the Port de Versailles in Paris.

The *Deux Chevaux*, also famous, or infamous, for its canvas roof, dashboard gearshift and infuriating folding windows, ceased production in France in 1988 and in Portugal in 1990.

Seven million were produced over 40 years. The original brief of the Citroën designers in 1935 - two years before the first VW Beetle - was to produce a car to convert rural France from the horse-cart. More precisely, the intention was to devise a low-price car "capable of transporting two farmers in clogs, 50kg of potatoes or a barrel of wine at 60 kilometres an hour, consuming three litres of petrol for every 100 kilometres".

Aesthetic considerations were "of no importance". The production models of

the 2CV exceeded these targets, in terms of petrol consumption at any rate. With care, the car would give well over 50 miles to the gallon, one of the most economical vehicles ever made.

It was, however, never very comfortable at anything more than 50 mph and its death knell was sounded by the building of autoroutes in France from the 1970s onwards. Thousands survive in the French countryside but they are becoming an increasingly rare sight.

No attempt has been made to restore the rediscovered prototypes to working order; they will be displayed just as they were found.

Another 2CV was unearthed, in pieces, at the same farm, close to an old Citroën test track, several years ago. This was a survivor from a small production run, built in 1939. This car was restored and is now running around with its original two-cylinder engine.

— John Lichfield, Paris



Going nowhere fast: Three vintage pre-production Citroën 2CVs, on display in Paris

Photograph: Alastair Miller

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Anger grows in Italy over skiers killed by US aircraft

Initial shock over the horrific accident caused by a low-flying US military aircraft at a Dolomites ski resort is quickly turning to fury over the presence in Italy of the planes which have been an irritant for years. Andrew Gumbel reports from Rome.

The Italian government sharply increased pressure on the United States yesterday to admit responsibility for the deaths of 20 skiers whose cable car in the Dolomites resort of Cavalese was knocked to the ground by a low-flying US military training aircraft.

Although it seems inconceivable that Italy would ask the Americans to pack up their military bases and go home, anti-US sentiment has reached heights unseen since the darkest days of the Cold War. The accident has prompted talk of colonialist arrogance and "Rambo in the sky", reminiscent of a time when Italians, particularly those on the left, strongly resented being treated as little more than a geopolitical domino by the Pentagon and the White House.

America's image has been tarnished further by the Clinton-Lewinsky sex scandal. "Down with Clinton, you're just a womaniser and a warmonger, a prostitute to power and war," was the reaction of one priest in Cavalese. Don Tommaso Volcan, as he first saw the mutilated bodies and twisted metal on the snow-covered slopes near his church.

The Americans are not the only scapegoat, however. The Italians have also turned considerable anger on their own government. The provincial council in Trento has published a letter from Mr Andreata in December 1996 explaining that low-flying exercises were an essential part of military training and that inhabited areas could not be avoided because Italy was too densely populated.

Quebec goes in search of new (French-speaking) blood

Give me your huddled masses, yearning to have jobs and wide open spaces. Must be young, French-speaking and well-educated. Knowledge of ice-hockey an advantage.

This is the message which the Quebec immigration minister, André Boisclair, will bring to France next month when he leads the province's first ministerial recruitment drive in the mother country.

Mr Boisclair will visit Paris and several French regions to encourage young people to come to Quebec in a three-year plan to boost immigration. Belgium,

Switzerland, and Franche-Comté North Africa will also be targeted, but Quebec is especially keen to increase French migration, now only 2,000 a year.

Quebec has 10.4 per cent unemployment, not much better than the rate in France. But it also has one of the lowest birth rates in the developed world and an ageing population. The Quebec authorities are determined to maintain a majority of French-speakers, partly for cultural reasons, partly to keep alive the dream of eventual separation from Canada.

— John Lichfield

'If I had been sent back to prison, I would have died'

Sheila Bowler was a respectable middle-class piano teacher – until she was wrongly accused of murdering an elderly aunt. She tells *Grania Langdon-Down* how four years in prison shook her middle-class sensibilities to the core.

As Sheila Bowler stood in the dock at the Old Bailey yesterday awaiting the verdict of her trial for murder, she shook in terror. "The jury looked very solemn. I glanced across the courtroom at my daughter and she was in tears. Then they said 'Not Guilty' and all grinned at me. I was weak with relief."

When her confused and elderly aunt wandered into a Sussex river and died in 1992, Sheila Bowler's life became a nightmare. A 68-year-old widow whose life revolved around her family, her piano teaching and her home town of Rye, Sheila was found guilty in July 1993 of murdering 89-year-old Florence Jackson. She lost her first appeal in May 1995 and served four years of her minimum 12-year life sentence before judges at her second appeal last summer ordered the retrial and released her on bail.

The case hinged on whether Aunt Flo could have walked unaided to her death in the River Brude in East Sussex after Sheila had left her alone in the car while she went to get help with a flat tyre. Yesterday the jury decided it was possible and cleared Sheila of pushing her aunt into the river. Her motive for killing Aunt Flo, whom she had cared for without complaint for years, was said to have been greed – the £252 weekly cost of Aunt Flo's nursing home was supposedly whittling away the value of the flat the aunt had left to Sheila in her will.

As Sheila resumes her life in the three bedroom house overlooking Rye, which she and her husband Bob bought 30 years ago, it is only the bag stamped HM PRISON SERVICE blocking a hole in the greenhouse roof that gives any hint of the 1,475 days that she spent as prisoner TV3389.

She is still bemused how she could have changed overnight from respectable widow to callous murderer. The *Daily Mail's* headline, "The aunt, the black widow and a murder most English", summed up the coverage when she was sentenced.

"I can't believe now how stupid I was to think prison was an impossibility. I felt the whole



End of the ordeal: Sheila Bowler, above, with her daughter Jane and, below, Aunt Flo whom Sheila was accused of killing Emma Boam/KNP

time during my arrest and first trial that what was happening was unreal and nothing to do with me. I knew I hadn't done anything and, in my blind faith in the legal system, I just thought it would soon be over."

She was so confident that when she went to see a barrister to discuss suing the hospital where her husband had died unexpectedly after routine surgery in 1992, she only mentioned in passing that she was facing "a bit of legal bother". The barrister was horrified when she told him she had been charged with murder.

It was that very detachment that helped confirm her as a cool, calculating killer in the eyes of the police and the jury. Too blunt and emotionally buttoned up for her own good, her case divided opinion even in her home town.

Prison shook her to the very core of her middle-class sensibilities. She remembers with painful clarity being driven to Holloway in a taxi, squashed between two prison officers. She was not allowed to say goodbye to her children – Simon, now 31, a customs officer, Jane, three years his junior and a talented cellist, and step-daughter Elizabeth, 51. On arrival, she was strip-searched, warned not to trust anyone, and sent to a dormitory on the psychiatric wing, automatically designated

a suicide risk as a new "lifer". "The room was filthy, with cockroaches coming in the window." One of her room mates was yelling out of the window to a friend, another kept kicking the door and a third was throwing a chair around.

"They were like animals in a cage. I just wanted to escape from it all, so I made my bed, covered my head with a blanket and was so exhausted that I fell asleep straight away." Her ability to sleep through almost any trauma helped her survive, she believes.

Sheila threw herself into cleaning the chapel, organising the library or handing out refreshments during visits, railing against the administration and the slackness of the other inmates in her diary. Her personal officer wrote at one point, "Sheila regards her peers as naughty schoolchildren and she misses the stimulation of the intellectual conversation she is so

used to. She states she finds it difficult to accept staff, some of whom are half her age, telling her when to get up, when to eat, etc."

Sheila quickly slipped into prison slang – talking of women "crutching" drugs (hiding them inside themselves) during visits, "squat searches" over a mirror during strip searches and "room spins" (searches). She was called "bloody murderer" when she first arrived at Bulwold Hall, a top security prison in Essex, to serve the first stage of her sentence. But the other inmates, most a third her age, soon nicknamed her Supergran after seeing her jog 21 times round the netball courts.

Her daughter, Jane, says: "Mum will hate me saying this but she did become quite institutionalised. We used to visit and she would be so busy telling us about what she had been doing. Simon used to come away really angry, saying 'she doesn't care about us'. But it was just her way of coping."

Sheila had too strong a faith to have taken her own life but she was convinced she would not survive. She had suffered a slight stroke, endured terrible migraines and eczema, while the humiliations, loneliness and

having been left comfortably off by her husband, she does now. Most of her savings went on her case. But the £18,000 from the sale of Aunt Flo's flat last year went to relatives because of her conviction. "And some of them had never even bothered to send Flo a Christmas card," she says pointedly.

Those last years behind bars continue to exact a price. While very close to her mother, Jane is moving to Scotland to rebuild her life after putting her career on hold to fight for Sheila's freedom. "I wish I had her strength," says Jane sadly. "I had such a happy childhood in Rye but I can't bear it now – the gossip was really malicious."

Her mother, on the other hand, strides round Rye, unconcerned by the sideways glances. "It won't be long before they have someone else to gossip about," she says wryly.

A PRISON DIARY

Holloway, Monday, 12 July 1993: when the word "Guilty" was pronounced in court, my only feeling was disbelief ... Charles Byers and Emma Kerr [her lawyers] came down to the cell to see me. The best Byers could think of [to say] was "At least you won't die in there."

Monday, 6 September 1993: I could weep at the sad spectacle they [the other prisoners] presented yesterday in chapel. Most of them are between 17 and 23 – most on drugs and many with several children. I have never seen such a dejected group of human beings. They are here for minor offences (apart from drug-dealing) such as non-payment of poll tax or TV licence. No way should they be locked up ... it only magnifies their deep sense of guilt and inadequacy.

Tuesday, 7 September 1993: Can always find things to do but nothing takes away the immense feeling of solitude and rage I feel. Do wish I didn't feel so miserable when I wake in the morning. It's not so bad once the day gets going. Motivation is so difficult to keep going and it is only nine weeks since I came here. It might as well be 9,000 weeks.

Wednesday, 22 September 1993: A really nice officer let me have a bath at 4.30 today. Then she said I could sit and watch TV. What a treat to see a bit of news uninterrupted. She didn't lock me in until 8pm. It was so peaceful – I felt almost human again.

In November 1993 Sheila was moved to Bulwold Hall in Essex, one of two high security women's prisons.

Tuesday, November 9 1993: [The wing] is ghetty – 12 mini-rooms each about 12ft high and only 9ft by 8ft. It is cold – the walls are cream-painted brick – and there is constant piped music ... horrible feeling of claustrophobia. Window in my room is 6ft from the ground and that is the only daylight.

Wednesday, 15 December 1993: Wing being decorated. Can't understand how people can be so jolly. Maybe if I wasn't here for life I would feel differently ... 7pm: just heard my tariff is 12 years. What a Christmas present!

Tuesday, 22 February 1994: "Really looking forward to darling Jane's visit this afternoon and she was so miserable and unhappy – perhaps because she was alone and didn't have to keep up appearances. How does God expect me to bear this pain and anguish?"

Sheila returned briefly to Holloway for her first unsuccessful appeal in April 1995.

Monday, 10 April 1995: The journey to the Court of Appeal took only 20 minutes though I felt lucky to get there at all because the hassle of getting out of this place was incredible. Nobody remembered to wake me, though of course I was up. Two pieces of white bread were pushed through the hatch with marge, two sausages and a tea bag, sugar and no water. At 7.30am I was taken to reception down four flights of stairs and subjected to another strip search – bra up and pants down – talk about, humiliating.

Sheila was transferred to Holloway in May 1996.

Saturday, 3 August 1996: I am writing this at 10am. We have been locked in since 12.15 yesterday and we discovered this morning that the cause is a missing pair of scissors ... you can imagine the racket being produced from all the rooms – screaming, shouting, banging of windows, sheets and clothes of all sorts being sent out of the windows alight. We were told at breakfast that the last time something was missing all inmates were locked in for four days.

Soon after this, despair set in and the diary stopped.

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Champion of the sensible work ethic: Gerry Robinson likes to paint at his house in Donegal, bottom right. He has decided his London home, top right, is now too big Philip Meech/Trevor McBride



Why office affairs should always be clandestine

You might think furtive lovers should be offering up thanks this week after news that major companies in the US have relaxed the rules on romances between workers.

In reality the secretive Romeo and Julies will be dismayed. So much fun has been taken out of life already that legitimising the office affair is the last straw. Neither will their co-workers be pleased. Witnessing the clandestine office affair is one of the few reasons why we still brave the horrors of commuting rather than working from home.

On Wednesday the *Wall Street Journal* surveyed major US companies and found that while in the past they had banned managers from dating subordinates, many major companies are now changing the rules to accommodate love.

For most of us in this country, though, the office romance continues to be fraught with difficulty, and thus the allure remains: the recruitment consultancy Office Angels estimates that 50 per cent of people meet their future partners at or through work.

Do we really want businesses to accept that affairs will happen – and indeed by doing so encourage them? Can the affair really survive that sort of respectability?

Imagine, in those first heady days of romance, admitting reality into that idyllic world by skipping hand-in-hand to the boss announcing your intention to date, fretting about causing problems with the "chain of command" before realising that your partner's habit of throwing their clothes on the floor drives you nuts; business meetings proceeding with mizzenes, any other business, and a list of who's snagging who.

To be frank, what is the point of investing in filing cabinets if not to steal kisses behind them? Why were electronic message systems ever invented if not to make clandestine assignations which involve each partner leaving the office exactly five minutes after the other?

But more important than the lovers' feelings is the amusement provided for fellow colleagues. In these days of insecure working conditions, there are few perks of the job. And one of them is definitely torturing and snipping on the lowdown.

Can you imagine the delight of Robin Cook's colleagues, once they found out Gaynor was having to wait in his darkened flat for hours to outwit the Secret Service? And how many smirking references to looking at legal briefs did the young Tony Blair and Cherie Booth have to endure in Derry Irvine's chambers?

The fact the British work the longest hours in Europe is thus explained: they're not there to work, merely to bug the lovers' phones.

Glenda Cooper

Quite ruthless – until it's time to go home

He spilt blood when he arrived at Granada and may be about to do the same at the Arts Council. Gerry Robinson is used to playing the shark ... but come 5 o'clock it's hat on and back to the wife and his other, more sedate, life.

There are two Gerry Robinsons. One is the head of two major British companies who is respected and feared in equally large measure by all who work with him. The other is a man who likes to leave work at 5pm for his wife and children and who dreams of retiring to his birthplace in Donegal.

Gerry Robinson, perhaps best known as chairman of Granada, Britain's biggest television programme maker, this week came under fire from shareholders for receiving £374,000 in a service contract deal. It cannot be a sum that matters much to him, since he also happens to be chairman of BSkyB and sits on the board of The Savoy. Until last year he was chairman of ITN. In May, he takes up a fourth executive position, as chairman of the Arts Council.

With so much work on his hands, colleagues and onlookers often ask how he manages to keep his personal life high on his list of priorities.

"He has made no secret that he values his family life," an insider at Granada said. "He is champion of the sensible work ethic. He says he makes 30 vital decisions a year

and if he can get those right then that's what really matters. He is the strategic thinker – he doesn't get involved in the minutiae of Granada.

"The story about him putting his top hat and tails on at 5pm every day is a bit of an urban myth that he is happy to have passed about. If the hours have to be put in then he will do it. But his view is that it isn't the hours you spend in a job but the worth of those hours. You have to strike a balance. He is very much wedded to his family."

The Granada chief, who is 49, has always said he will retire at 55 and return to his birthplace in Ireland. He grew up in Dunfanaghy in Donegal, the ninth of 10 children to a village carpenter. He was christened Gerrard Jude. Robinson because he was born on 23 October 1948, between St Gerrard's and St Jude's days.

He now has a house in Donegal, living there for up to eight weeks a year, whiling away the days oil painting. He spends his money on what is important to him: a year ago while holidaying in Ireland, he was swamped with inquiries from Irish rooters after cashing in £520,000 worth of shares, explaining that he needed the money for repairs to his Donegal home.

Robinson has come a long way since he and his family moved across the Irish Sea. His family settled in the East End of London and the young Robinson entered the seminary of St Mary's College in Lancashire. He left with eight O-levels and four A-levels but had lost the urge to join the

priesthood: instead, he got a job sticking pictures of Matchbox toys into a catalogue. Ten years later he was taken on by the entrepreneurial group Lex Service before joining Granada. By the age of 35, he was head of Coca Cola (UK).

He made his own, multi-million-pound fortune in catering (which later earned him the slur "ignorant upstart caterer" from the comedian John Cleese when he entered the TV business) following a management buy-out in 1988 of Granada's contract catering division.

His charm has not always worked. There have been a few notable stand-offs. Perhaps the biggest was after his arrival at Granada as chief executive in 1991, having been recruited over breakfast at Claridge's by Alex Bernstein, then executive chairman. Among the prominent people to fall swiftly on their swords were David Plowright, the distinguished programme maker and Lord Olivier's brother-in-law. "I asked people what they did, and they kept going on about *The Jewel in the Crown*. But that had been made 10 years ago," Robinson said. Other redundancies followed,

prompting Labour, then in opposition, to call for Granada's franchise to be withheld.

Granada's takeover of the Forte hotels empire in 1996 also required the stomach for a battle, prompting Olga Polizzi, Lord Forte's daughter, to call Robinson and his colleagues "bastards". It was to no avail: Granada took Forte, and with it every Little Chef in the UK, as well as the George V hotel in Paris.

For the present, Robinson lives in a luxurious detached Victorian house in Addison Road, in Holland Park, an exclusive part of west London where the seriously rich rub shoulders and a number of embassies also have their homes. The house, which contains seven bedrooms, six bathrooms and four reception rooms, also offers an "in and out" carriage drive, indoor swimming pool, a staff flat and a west-facing 100ft garden, where Robinson also pursues his painting passion. Neighbours include Paul Allen, a partner in Microsoft, Sir Elton John and the Virgin chief Richard Branson.

He shares the house with his second wife and former secretary Heather and their children, April and Tim. The house is on the market. A spokesman for Mr Robinson, who also has two grown-up children, Samantha and Jonathan, by his first marriage to Maria, said: "I have heard him talk within the last six months about scaling down and moving to a smaller place.

"Basically two of his children have left home and he feels he doesn't need as much space." The spokesman added that selling

the house would not be a precursor to Robinson scaling down his involvement in Granada and fulfilling his long-heralded intention of returning to Ireland.

His other interests, apart from his family, are the theatre and the opera. He enjoys performances at Covent Garden – though he has been accused of being "a lover of opera highlights" – and has sat on the council of the Royal Court Theatre. He takes up his post as chairman of the Arts Council in May. The job is for one-and-a-half days a week and unpaid.

The Arts Council may be in for a culture shock from the man described by a close work associate as "a shark in a Val Doonican pullover". His appointment followed the observation from a Commons Select Committee in December that it would be better to "recruit a philistine with financial acumen" to run the Royal Opera House than another "creative" type. Some would say the same criterion is being applied to the Arts Council.

People who work with Robinson rarely have a bad word to say about their boss, despite his ability to be ruthless when necessary. "He charms the pants off everyone at Granada and people like working with him," said a colleague. "We know he can be nice but if you're not doing your job then you get called in for what he describes as a fireside chat, which is not a pleasant experience.

"He's respected for being honest. He's not the smiling assassin who knifes you in the back. If you've screwed up, he will tell you to your face."

BY MARK ROWE

buy-out in 1988 of Grand Met's contract

catering division.

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Cliffie Stone

Clifford Gilpin Snyder (Cliffie Stone), musician, broadcaster and record company executive; born Stockton, California 1 March 1917; twice married (three sons, one daughter); died Santa Clara, California 17 January 1996.

The sprawling metropolis of 1990s Los Angeles may not be the most obvious candidate for "country music capital of America", but from the late 1930s to the early 1950s it was close to being just that. The Great Depression had seen a huge influx of dispossessed Southerners into California and many brought with them a taste for "hillbilly" music with the inevitable result that dedicated shows dominated local radio programming.

The radio station KFVD's *Covered Wagon Jubilee*, hosted by Stuart Hamblen, was among the most popular of these and featured a large, bearded banjoist named Herman "The Hermit" Snyder. Snyder had been a musical fixture in the area for nearly two decades and had taught his son Cliffie to play bass guitar. The young Snyder seemed intent on a musical career and while still in his teens joined the cast of the show. Working under the name Cliffie Stonehead - later shortened to Stone - he augmented his bass-playing by serving as announcer, disc jockey and comic and was soon fronting shows of his own. He also performed in the

house band at the Pasadena Community Playhouse and in the hotel dance bands of both Anson Weeks and Freddie Slack. It was whilst with the latter that he made his recording debut in 1942 for the fledgling Capitol Records, a label with whom he would enjoy a fruitful association. He became assistant to Capitol's head producer Lee Gillette and, as the label's "expert" on hillbilly talent, brought a number of important acts onto its roster, including Merle Travis, Tex Williams, Jimmy Wakely and Hank Thompson.

The hits turned out by Stone's stable - including Williams's "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)" (1947) and Wakely's "One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart)" (1948) - are credited with keeping Capitol buoyant at a time when it was still struggling to establish itself. As he later recalled: "We kept [Capitol] alive. Nat Cole used to hang around our sessions. He'd show up just amazed. He couldn't believe these guys could just play without any music or anything."

Stone himself recorded several sides, enjoying hits with "Silver Stars, Purple Sage, Eyes of Blue" (1947) and a version of the Wiley Walker/Gene Sullivan standard "When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again" (1948). He and Merle Travis also penned three outright classics: "No Vacancy", "Divorce Me C.O.D." and "So Round, So Firm, So Fully Packed".

- Paul Wadey

In the meantime, Stone continued to work on radio. During the Second World War, he fronted more than 20 weekly shows and by 1946 was hosting KXLA Pasadena's *Dinner Bell Round-Up*, which later metamorphosed into the famous *Hometown Jamboree*. There he met the announcer and sometime singer, Tennessee Ernie Ford. Recognising Ford's talent, Stone became his manager, signed him to Capitol, where he proved hugely successful, and eventually produced the television shows which brought Ford and country music into the living rooms of suburban America.

Hometown Jamboree boasted a formidable cast over the years - Wesley Tuttle, Merle Travis, Joe and Rose Lee Mapes, the child star Dallas Frazier and the instrumental wizards Jimmy Bryant and Speedy West - and all of them naturally gravitated to Capitol. From 1948 the show was broadcast live on television.

By the 1960s, however,



Stone: 'So round, so firm, so fully packed'

Dennis Selinger

Dennis Selinger, theatrical agent; born Black Rock, Brighton 20 July 1921; married 1968 Debra Winchester (marriage dissolved 1997); died London 2 February 1998.

In the often maligned world of theatrical agents who avidly seek work for their clients in return for a percentage, Dennis Selinger was unusual for the respect and warmth with which he was regarded. He rose from a humble start to become a superagent with one of the most powerful show-business agencies, and many of his clients (who included Michael Caine, Peter Sellers and David Niven) became close friends.

Born in Black Rock, Brighton, in 1921, Selinger was the youngest of four children, and since his parents were elderly his older sister became a surrogate mother to him. When she married the theatrical agent Monty Lyon, Selinger became attracted to the idea of pursuing a similar career and at the age of 16 found work for his first client, a fan dancer in the East End who, according to Selinger, championed him to step into the role when Moore departed.

When Faye Dunaway's career was in the doldrums and she was parting from her husband Terry O'Neill she turned to Selinger for guidance and within two years her career had revived. The legendary comics Charles Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, and Laurel and Hardy were all managed by Selinger when they were in England.

- Tom Vallance



Selinger: super-agent

CMA metamorphosed into ICM (International Creative Management), Selinger took charge of their film-star roster. Among the leading Americans he represented in this country were Marlon Brando, Barbra Streisand and Bette Davis.

He would recount that when he first met Davis she was holding forth in the studio canteen, and when interrupted to be introduced to him, she opened her eyes wide, looked him up and down and said, "Yes fine, he'll be great for the part."

A bachelor for most of his life, Selinger in 1968 married the businesswoman Debra Winchester, who lived in the same street and had known him for many years. "I was literally the girl next door," she said. Though they divorced 10 months ago, they remained close. Selinger continued working on behalf of clients from his hospital bed until a few days before his death.

- Tom Vallance

John Hay



John Albert Hay, politician; born Brighton 24 November 1919; MP (Conservative) for Henley 1950-1974; PPS to President of Board of Trade 1951-56; Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport 1959-63; Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1963-64; Under-Secretary for Defence for the Royal Navy 1964; married 1947 Beryl Found (one son, one daughter; marriage dissolved 1973); 1974 Janet Spruce; died 27 January 1996.

When you next use a parking meter, or cannot find a parking space next to one, bless, or curse, according to your inclination, John Hay.

When you next want to get to a remote destination by rail, and find that the line was probably used by your parents, you will almost certainly curse Hay; for he was the junior minister at the Department of Transport - under the flamboyant Ernest Marples - who, over four years from the Conservative general election victory of 1959, devised and introduced meters, and it was he who implemented the swingeing cuts in the rail network which Lord Beeching recommended to the government of Harold Macmillan. If you are sympathetic to so-called "green" issues, you may also blame Hay for being the executive minister who put in place the massive road-building programme visualised by Marples.

As a young man, Hay was an immensely successful politician;

he was not unlike the young William Hague. He made his first - intensely dramatic - Tory Party Conference speech in 1946, at the age of 28, then an unheard-of triumph by a strapping, Hague, of course, made his first big impact at 15. But Hay was destined to decline into political obscurity or unpopularity, because of the measures he adopted; Hague has gone on to acquire at least the hope of glory.

Hay had seemed set fair for great success. At the age of 11 he worked for his father's campaign to become a member of Brighton council, thereby acquiring very early political experience. In 1947 as Chairman of the Young Conservative movement, he entertained both Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden at the YCC annual conference. The two great men were sensible of the desirability of speaking to this gathering for, at that time, the Young Conservatives were the largest voluntary youth organisation in the

world. Only a few months ago, their numbers in sharp decline, and their social behaviour judged outrageous by the party establishment, they were abolished by William Hague. Until 1970, when Edward Heath passed him over for a ministerial job, John Hay made a quite dashing impression. He was the son of a local solicitor, and went to grammar school in Brighton, but he was said to have been Etonian airs. He was handsome and debonair, and he was a fine public speaker. He had high ambitions, but something, somewhere, went wrong.

Perhaps it was that Hay had too much independence of mind, and was too ready to speak that mind forcefully. In 1947, for example, he was adopted as the Conservative Party's parliamentary candidate for Brixton. Brixton was not a winnable seat but Hay, like other youngsters then and now, was expected to blood himself in a hopeless fight. Within months he resigned the candidacy, on the publicly declared grounds that the local party association was both lazy and incompetent. This demonstration of chutzpah did not, however, prevent his being adopted for Henley the next year; he entered Parliament in the 1950 general election.

The truth about Hay seems to be that, for all his soft charm, he relished outspokenness, and did not in the least mind unpopularity, which he endured in full measure during the Marples years. Again, when from 1968 he succeeded in turning around the fortunes of Walport - an entertainment subsidiary of Rediffusion of which he was managing director - he left many bruised egos in his wake.

Hay retired from the House of Commons in 1974, partly on grounds of health, partly, I think because he knew that he had no serious future in politics. John Hay's star, alas, was one that shimmered, but never shone.

- Patrick Cosgrove

Davy Kaye

Davy Kaye, comedian and actor; born London 25 April 1916; MBE 1995; married Hazel Wilson (one son; marriage dissolved); died Paradise Island, Bahamas 3 February 1998.

Davy Kaye was the archetypal East End Jewish comedian who would have been seen by his mother to have "done well".

Standing just under five feet, he was a cocky wisecracking figure, both on stage and off, who looked as if he would have been just as much at home in a tailor's shop. He had more in common with American comics such as Milton Berle and Sid Caesar than he did with British variety and yet for 60 years he managed to top variety bills, made numerous radio broadcasts for the BBC and was a popular panelist on quiz shows. One of the highlights of his stage act was his one-man-band routine where he played "McNamara's Band" with drums, cymbals and booters and in the process got caught up in a complete shambles.

His first professional engagement was on a variety bill in 1935 at the Mile End Empire.

At the outbreak of the Second World War he was rejected by the Army on the grounds of his diminutive size, later telling the story that the medical officer had said, "When we declare war on pygmies - we'll send for you." This led to his appearing in variety and revue shows at munitions factories and army bases before joining the BBC, where he was a regular with such shows as *Midday Music*.



Kaye: diminutive

parts) in the ill-fated 1960 Wolf Mankowitz musical *Belle (The Ballad of Dr Crippen)*, which was deemed a disaster by the critics.

After the war his agent was the legendary Joe Collins (the father of Joan), who booked him as principal comic in Ted Hinge's revue *Funny Get Your Gun* in London. The title became the subject of a well-publicised court case brought by the impresario Emile Little, who was presenting the musical *Annie Get Your Gun* at the same time. Little lost the case and the posters were then overprinted by Kaye himself with the words "The Show They Tried to Ban" which naturally increased business.

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1968, Kaye was resident late night comedian at the Embassy Club in London, and at one stage was doubling by appearing as the character Benny Southstreet in the original production of *Gays and Dolls* at the London Coliseum. He played the lead (which was actually five

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Edward Craig

All is not lost for those readers unnerved by the sound of Edward Craig's unfulfilled biography of his grandfather Gaeano McCa, wife Marie-Jacqueline McCaister [further to the obituary by Tom Craig, 23 January].

On 25 November 1994 BBC Radio 3 broadcast a magical feature, *Orpheus Ascending*, produced by Piers Plowright. Here arrick/Craig recounts the story of his young grandfather's epic

walk in 1860 from "the instep" of Italy through France and on to London with only his harp and asses' skin cloak - no money, no baggage, few words of French and fewer English. Carrick acts out, with infectious enthusiasm, all the characters and their attendant noises - Gaeano, villagers, the brigands with whom he made friends, the Italian mammas who befriended him, the memorable captain

of the ship at Boulogne who took him under his wing and smuggled him into London sans passport, while sundry Italians fill in the background with evocative songs and verses.

In London Gaeano had to find sympathetic Italian restaurants who would allow him to "play" his harp in their back gardens, safe from the police who were out to catch itinerant musicians who might upset im-

portant - or sick - residents. When all his resources were no more, an Italian barter sent him to see Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who was enchanted by the boy and introduced him to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as grinder of colours, model and student painter, until he made his own name with the mosaics in the great hall of Mr Debenham's grandioses house in Holland Park, and finally became

naturalised, sponsored by William Morris.

Carrick ends with his recollection of how he mended the family rift since his father Gordon Craig, already married, eloped with Gaeano's favorite daughter Elena. At the age of six his parents told him to approach this unknown grandparent in Italian. "Nonno, nonno," he cried out. Gaeano was captivated.

LAW REPORT: 6 FEBRUARY 1998

Lockable folding pocket knife is a bladed article

A folding pocket knife which was capable of being locked open was a bladed article for the purposes of section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Regan v Deegan: Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Waller, Mr Justice Owen and Mr Justice Sullivan) 4 February 1998

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of Desmond Garcia Deegan against his conviction at Harrow Crown Court on his plea of guilty, following a ruling by the judge, to possessing a bladed article in a public place contrary to section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The appellant had been stopped by police officers and had been found to be in possession of a pocket knife which was capable of being opened and locked into an open posi-

tion, and equally capable of being folded once the mechanism had been operated to unlock the blade. He was charged with an offence under section 139 of the Act, and originally pleaded not guilty. He changed his plea, however, after the judge had ruled that he was bound by two decisions of the Divisional Court, namely *Harris v DPP* and *Fehmi v DPP* (1993) 96 Cr App R 235, and that the interpretation placed on a bladed article in those cases applied to the bladed article found in the appellant's possession.

The judge discharged the appellant absolutely, and certified that the matter was fit for appeal.

Benjamin Hargreaves (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant; Ian Leeks (Crown Prosecution Service) for the Crown.

Lord Justice Waller said that the conditions of *Pepper v Hart* (1993) AC 593 were applicable so as to make admissible ministerial statements made whilst the Bill which ultimately became the Criminal Justice Act 1988 was being debated in Parliament, and that the court should accordingly look at certain passages in *Harris*, which, he submitted, clearly showed that the type of knife carried by the appellant was intended to be a folding pocket knife if the cutting edge of its blade exceeds three

inches.

The Divisional Court had held in *Harris v DPP* and *Fehmi v DPP* that to be a "folding pocket knife" the blade had to be readily and immediately foldable at all times simply by the folding process. A knife which on opening automatically locked and could not be folded until a button had been pressed was not a "folding pocket knife".

Counsel for the appellant had sought to persuade the

court that the conditions of *Pepper v Hart* (1993) AC 593 were applicable so as to make admissible ministerial statements made whilst the Bill which ultimately became the Criminal Justice Act 1988 was being debated in Parliament, and that the court should accordingly look at certain passages in *Harris*, which, he submitted, clearly showed that the type of knife carried by the appellant was intended to be a folding pocket knife differently from the way in which the Divisional Court had construed it.

In those circumstances the conditions of *Pepper v Hart* had not been fulfilled, and it was not legitimate for the court to

When it comes to welfare, the special relationship offers a lesson in failure



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Glamour, foreign policy and ideology have always been the three ingredients of the special relationship between British and American governments. So it is with Mr Blair's trip to Washington. The glamour works both ways. The Prime Minister gets the red carpet treatment from the "most powerful man in the world" and huge US media coverage, some of which will be reflected back into our islands. While Bill Clinton gets a big endorsement from Mr Squeaky-Clean. No matter that Mr Blair would rather be thought "effective" than squeaky-clean. Or that most Americans have no idea that Mr Blair is a Christian moralist with a blameless private life: he is British, polite and easily captioned as the most successful centre-left politician of the democratic world.

The fact that the President is knee-deep in the trash of the affair of "Monica whatever-her-name-is", as the Prime Minister's official spokesman described her, means that the terms of trade in image are more

in Britain's favour than ever. Mr Blair can hardly be criticised for wanting to take full advantage of the situation, although so far his attempts to provide moral support for the President without commenting on the specific allegations have been rather unconvincing. But we are entitled to ask what the people of Britain are getting out of it.

For some, questioning the special relationship is simply absurd, reminiscent of the Monty Python sketch. "Yes, but, apart from saving our nation in two world wars and rebuilding Europe with Marshall Aid, what have the Americans ever done for us?" Surely, though, all alliances have to be judged afresh for each generation, as Mr Blair himself might put it.

So let us consider the other two aspects of the relationship. First, foreign policy. We should put aside the thought that missile-rattling against Saddam Hussein is a diversionary tactic aimed at American public opinion. Even if that were true, it would not invalidate military action against Iraq.

if it is justified in international law. And it should be said clearly and unhesitatingly that it is.

As the Prime Minister reminded the Commons on Wednesday, the Iraqi leader agreed at the UN to destroy all his chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. Since then, UN inspectors have found abundant evidence that he has failed to do so. Mr Blair is quite right to pledge this country's full support for the enforcement of UN resolutions. That is not slavishly following Washington's line: it would be required by any foreign policy calling itself "ethical", and it is the French and the Russians who should be criticised for trying to undermine the rule of law.

There is no need for a special relationship here. However, simply stopping Saddam from developing weapons of mass destruction will not bring a just and lasting settlement in Iraq. That requires a wider accommodation between the

Arab countries and the West, and Israel. Where the British government has been too reluctant to criticise America is on its policy towards Israel. If UN resolutions had not yet been realised in the US, "Welfare as we know it" has not been ended, and the "Wisconsin model" for getting people off welfare and into work has only just started. The fact is that, after five years, Mr Clinton's side of the table has surprisingly little concrete to offer Mr Blair's.

The President's State of the Union address last week would have been good at the start of an administration, but not towards its end. No wonder both leaders say they are worried that their joint "project" will be seen more as soundbite than substance.

Let us hope that, behind the niceties, Mr Blair and his party are learning the real lessons of the relative failure of the New Democrat project. As with many human relationships, the special relationship needs a healthy dose of hypocrisy and mutual scepticism to succeed.

truth is that the promise of Clintonism, which won the presidency in 1992 and inspired Mr Blair's dash for the Labour leadership on a platform of social moralism, has not yet been realised in the US. "Welfare as we know it" has not been ended, and the "Wisconsin model" for getting people off welfare and into work has only just started. The fact is that, after five years, Mr Clinton's side of the table has surprisingly little concrete to offer Mr Blair's. The President's State of the Union address last week would have been good at the start of an administration, but not towards its end. No wonder both leaders say they are worried that their joint "project" will be seen more as soundbite than substance.

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LETTERS

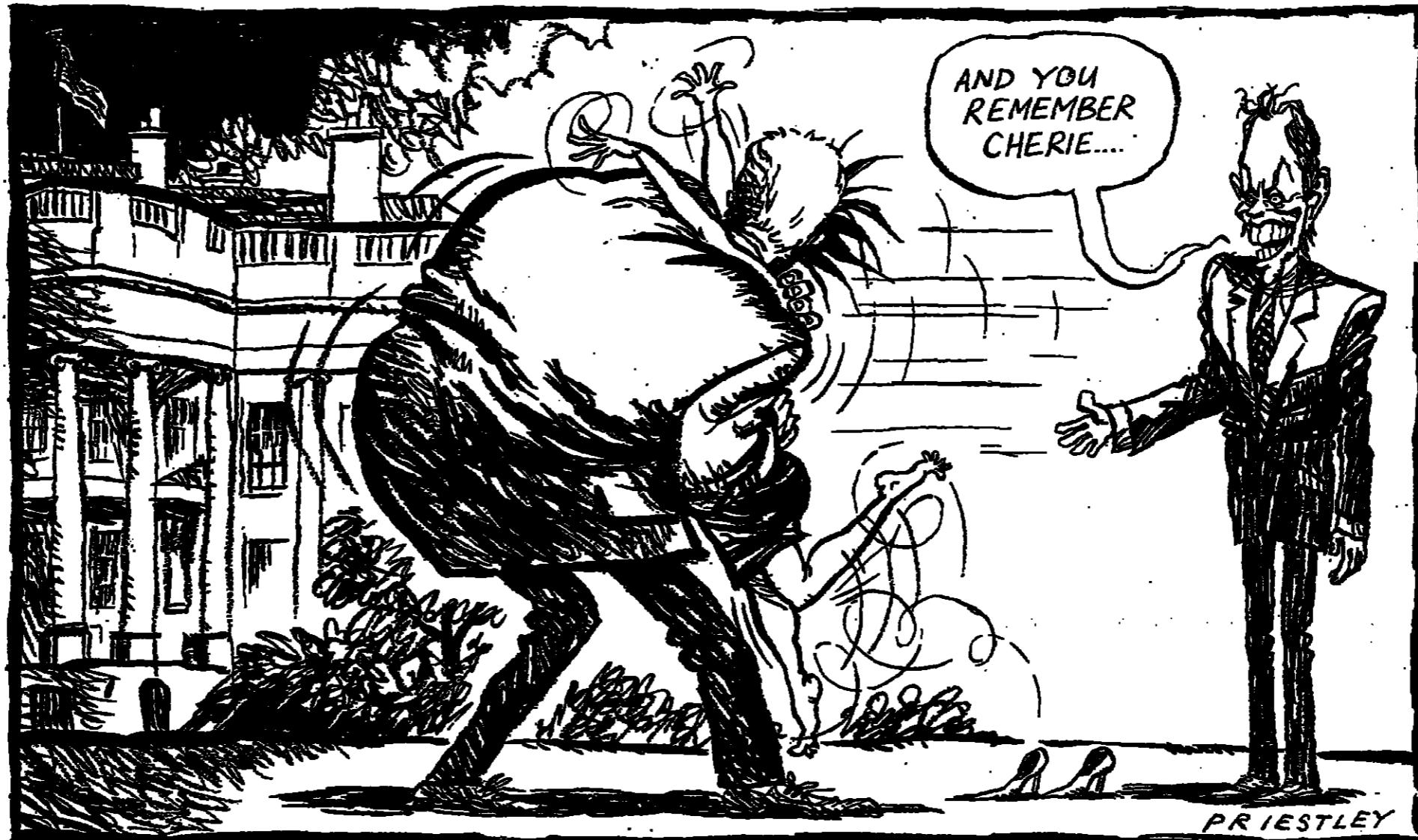
Saville inquiry

If Lord Saville of Newdigate's inquiry into the killings in Derry on 30 January 1972 is to have a less implausible outcome than the late Lord Widgery's, he and his colleagues must be given, and be seen to be given, access to all pertinent testimonies. This is a matter in which the British culture of traditional secrecy is inapplicable.

It is reported that official British medical records concerning the persons killed and wounded on Bloody Sunday are being withheld from the public until the year 2047 ("Military accused of lying to 1972 inquiry", 30 January). The bans on publication of the records must be lifted at once, so that quotations may be made in the published report upon the inquiry.

Witnesses will also wish to read them before being summoned to the public hearings. Unless the documents are released for consultation, there is a danger that the objectivity of the inquiry will be called into question before it has even begun.

GEORGE HUXLEY
Trinity College, Dublin
The writer was a Member of the Executive, Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association 1971-72



Bombs won't work

Bombing Iraq would be ineffective in forcing Iraqi compliance, as it would serve to increase Saddam Hussein's support amongst Iraqi people ("Cook flies to the gulf", 4 February).

By 1993, according to Unicef, the economic sanctions to impoverish the country had caused at least 100,000 child deaths from malnutrition, vaccine-preventable diseases and contaminated water supplies. Combined with civilian casualties in the Gulf War and the two cruise missile attacks which have taken place since then, it is easy to spread the perception that the West is interested in harming the general population of Iraq rather than its brutal leadership.

To the small extent that the Iraqi government needs the support of the people, Saddam Hussein would be pleased to take any opportunity to portray himself as standing up to outside pressure. Britain and the United States are trapped, one fears, into a narrow and un-

pleasant range of options because they have a narrow and unpleasant agenda – the replacement of Saddam Hussein with an equally totalitarian, but obedient, leader.

MARK WALMSLEY
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire

What's the big idea?

Hamish McRae argues ("Bill or Tony: which one will history remember?", 4 February) that neither Bill Clinton nor Tony Blair has yet developed the "big idea" which was so distinguishing a feature of Margaret Thatcher's administration. However, he concedes that a possible idea is now emerging based on altering people's perception as to their own enhanced responsibilities with the state, in effect, acting as an enabler rather than a provider.

The prognosis sounds very

Eizioni, with its moral rhetoric of rights and duties. This is all very well, as far as it goes, but the problem is that the contours of state and society are so much determined by the market today that it is difficult to see how broader structural inequalities can be tackled with this type of solution.

For example, the contingent or part-time workforce in the United States (on 1983 figures) is 25 per cent of the total and fast rising – for many this means a life of insecurity, poor pay and prospects with few benefits. The UK is following a similar trajectory. The big idea, if one exists, is to transform the plight of the bottom one-third so that they can share in the prosperity of the majority. I have read or heard little from either leader which gives grounds for optimism.

RICHARD DE ZOYA
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London SE1

Merit from mergers

It must be very difficult for the directors of Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham to decide on the merits or otherwise of their merger when they have such a strong financial interest in its going ahead (Business Outlook, 3 February). The advisers, who are reported to be likely to receive £400m for their contribution to an agreed merger (I would be happy to do this myself for rather less), also have a considerable incentive, which in many other spheres would raise questions about the quality of their advice.

I suggest to the directors that they could easily persuade the public of their objectivity by committing the profit from share options arising from the merger (rather than from their good stewardship of the company) to charity, or to the redundancy fund for those members of their staff whose departure will be the prime cause of the added

value of the joint company? This would be analogous to the building society which makes it a requirement of new members that they similarly donate windfall bonuses. On a rather different scale, of course.

MICHAEL SHOESMITH
Lydbury North, Shropshire

The case for legal aid

Martin McKenna perpetuates the myth that civil legal aid for compensation claims is granted to undeserving cases (report, 4 February).

I am a partner in a legal aid practice. It is very difficult to obtain legal aid for a client who has a fighting chance. It is easier to obtain legal aid for a client who is almost certain to win. Unless a client has more than a 75 per cent chance of winning, he will not get legal aid.

Further, Mr McKenna perpetuates the myth that businesses end up paying for the legal advice they receive in defending claims. Most business-

es have legal expenses insurance and if they do not, then they ought to obtain it.

Claims for personal injury, according to the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers, cost the Legal Aid Fund about £55,213,348 and the Government receives from the compensator (usually an insurance company) about £67m in repayment of benefits received by the injured party as a result of the injuries suffered. Civil legal aid spent on personal injury cases is therefore money well spent. The total amount of compensation recovered in 1995/96 was £518,584,482 and most of this will have been paid by insurers.

The Lord Chancellor, the Home Secretary and their ministers are attacking legal aid and those lawyers who work within its confines without producing any real evidence that legal aid is abused by applicants or lawyers.

A M ROBINSON
Pearson Caulfield Solicitors
Newcastle upon Tyne
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Bigoted musicians

It was predictable a few hard-line atonalists would come out of the woodwork and misconstrue my speech to the World Economic Forum as an attack on them (letters, 4 and 5 February). Yet I specifically said "I do not necessarily criticise that style". What I did criticise was the arrogant attitude, exemplified by Martin Parker, that it is only acceptable to write contemporary classical music in one style.

That bigoted, narrow-minded approach was a primary cause of Western classical music's current malaise.

I fail to understand how Mr Parker can interpret my pleas for greater media coverage of gung-ho-free classical music and for more concert reviews in quality newspapers as "anti-culture". And, by the way, what does he mean by "contemporary art music"?

JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER
London SW7

Tougher on drivers

James Hannaway (letter, 4 February) writes that his freedom to drink and drive should not be sacrificed. I am in favour of more restrictions on my driving freedom – the new lower limit on drink-driving, a ban on using mobile phones while driving, a 20mph speed limit in residential areas. Why? Because on the best available evidence, all these measures would reduce deaths and serious injuries on the roads, and I don't think my convenience is worth anyone else's suffering.

MICHAEL NICHOLAS
Oxford

We have more deaths on the road than other European countries. We are more densely populated than almost any other country in Europe – isn't this likely to ensure we have more deaths, regardless of how low the drink-drive limit is? If we had a zero drink-drive limit, would this mean that we would have no deaths from drunken drivers? Is there any way of knowing how low the limit must be before the effect of reduced levels has no further effect? We may already be at that level, given the number of cars on our roads.

NICK AUSTIN
Crowhurst, East Sussex

Perhaps James Hannaway and his fellow two-pint drinkers could consider the possibility of "stopping off" for one pint, and having their second pint at home.

CAPT M D RAHILLY
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

Abolish the lottery

"We told you so" is always an irritating comment, but it remains the fact that, three years ago, many in the churches warned that the National Lottery was an inherently sleazy licence to print money. A corruption scandal ended the previous national lottery 170 years ago, after a run of about a century. It now appears its successor was tainted from the very beginning ("Call for investigation into Camelot's lottery licence", 5 February).

Given the lamentable track record, surely the time has come not to reform this charity-robbing tax on the poor, but to abolish it?

THE REV PETER HATTON
Droitwich, Worcestershire

Recaptured by the Pirates, and surrendering again to the other forgotten lures of youth



MILES
KINGTON

Looking back to my teens, I realise that adolescence wasn't just a time for experimenting. It was a time for giving up as well. I think I probably abandoned more practices in my teens than I ever adopted or persevered with, or indeed that I have abandoned since. For instance, before I reached the age of 19 or 20 I had already stopped writing poetry, playing rugby, playing the trombone, trying to learn Welsh, taking bagpipe lessons, doing the high jump, attempting to master ballroom dancing, having homosexual leanings, and reading Agatha Christie and Dennis Wheatley. I haven't done any of them since, not once. Occasionally I regret not having learnt Welsh, and when I was 19 I used to feel sorry I had managed to read all Agatha Christie's books without leaving any to look forward to (but then I discovered Raymond Chandler), despite which I go through life on the whole without a back-

ward glance to that far-off, oddly assort-ed collection of enthusiasms.

However, the other day I did go back. Not to any of the above practices, but to something I thought had been eradicated by over-exposure in my teens – to an evening of Gilbert and Sullivan. My parents sent me to the kind of school that liked to put on Gilbert and Sullivan productions because they were safe and not to difficult and sedentary and full of opportunities for musicians and performers and carpenters, and so I found myself from time to time playing bit parts in *The Mikado* and *HMS Pinafore*, and lots more. And because Gilbert wrote very good jokes and Sullivan wrote very good tunes, I enjoyed it and it all stuck in my mind somewhere, like a deserted pool in the woods, no longer visited but all still there.

I never thought of going to see a Gilbert and Sullivan opera when I grew up,

partly because I had grown up, partly because it was the sort of thing it was more fun to do yourself than see someone else doing, and partly because my experience at school taught me that if you saw G & S done by complete strangers, it wasn't half as good as when you knew everyone in the cast. I had been taken occasionally to see D'Oyly Carte productions, which were dead from the waist up and down, and had once seen a film of *HMS Pinafore* ... done by Americans which was such an awful concept that, mentally, I walked out of it.

(Interestingly, the Americans are often nuts about Gilbert and Sullivan. I have never worked out why. Is there any other nation in the world that even knows about G & S? Have the French come to terms with them yet? The Germans ...?)

And then this week the Theatre Royal, Bath, was home for a week to *The Pirates of Penzance* done by the West Yorkshire

Playhouse. I knew about the WYP. They were, apparently, wonderful. Their productions were often reviewed in places like *Kaleidoscope*, and always raptly, and put on in Leeds, which I couldn't get to. They probably had done a good job on *The Pirates of Penzance*. I then discovered that neither my wife nor my son had ever seen any G & S, so off we went tentatively and fearfully on Monday, and I have to report that everyone thought it was terrific. Much better than I remember it from my teens.

This was partly because the material itself stood up quite well, like a mature if slightly staid pantomime, but mostly because the production took liberties which D'Oyly Carte would never have dreamt of, without sabotaging it. Wherever things were a bit staid or slow, they camped it up a bit – the policemen, especially, were glorifyingly over the top led by a wonderfully rubbery Sergeant (Stephen Matthews), the

Pirate King (Jeremy Harrison) managed to be funny as well as tremendously dashing, while Frederic was terribly tall and handsome, and had a lovely voice ...

I looked up Frederic in the programme to see who he was played by, and found it was an actor called Mark Umbers, of whom his programme biographical note said: "The Pirates of Penzance is Mark's first professional theatre work." Blimey. If that was his first job, apart from one or two bits on TV, he's going to go far ...

Well, in years to come will I look back at this moment as the start of my second childhood? The moment when I started reverting to lost pleasures? Is that an Agatha Christie novel I see before me? Will I have another bash at the bagpipes? Or the waltz? Well, of course not. The idea is quite ludicrous. But then, so was the idea of giving Gilbert and Sullivan another go.

I had better watch myself.

هذا من الأصل

لماذا من لا يلخص

We must trust the judges to wield the blue pencil



DAVID AARONOVITCH
PRIVACY AND PREJUDICE

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, is a man so imposing that one might easily believe that his enormous wig of office is, in reality, his own hair. And the voice that emerges from beneath that wig is no less impressive, possessing the fruity resonance of a great actor – Sir Donald Sinden perhaps – reading passages from the Old Testament to an audience of ladies in a large oak-panelled room. He is also, of course, both mentor to, and confidant of, the Prime Minister. It is hardly surprising then, that when this voice utters, the utterances are treated as lapidary. One by one they are mentally incised by his listeners on imaginary tablets of stone.

It is therefore difficult for such a man to engage in speculation without the world becoming convinced that legislation follows close behind. So when Lord Irvine took Ian Hargreaves – the editor of the *New Statesman* – upstairs to see his new wallpaper, and spoke about a range of subjects, one of which was the press and privacy, it was only to be expected that his amiably casual replies to the questions he was asked should have been subsequently invested with an almost immediate intention. The Lord Chancellor's "privacy plans" were giving rise, we were told yesterday morning, to "censorship fears".

Journalists' paranoia has been fuelled this week by two reminders of the willingness of MPs to speak foolishness in relation to what is printed or broadcast. Brian Walden's ungenerous comments about Nelson Mandela led more than 50 MPs – mostly Labour – to condemn his "disgraceful and jaundiced attack" on the South African leader. Their inference appeared to be that that Mr Walden's words should not have been transmitted. Yet as Boyd Tonkin's article on this page shows, his thesis is properly a matter for argument not censorship. The same applies to Kevin McNamara, a Catholic MP for Hull, who seemed to suggest that a television programme featuring the cooking and eating of a placenta should be banned because it amounted to support for cannibalism.

Yet the Lord Chancellor was not being foolish or threatening, but merely engaging in a civilised discussion with Mr Hargreaves about how to deal with what might be called the Great Collision – the difficult meeting between the right of the individual to privacy and the right of the same individual to freedom of expression. And what lends urgency to this discussion is the forthcoming enactment of the Human Rights Bill (essentially the incorporation into British law of the European Convention on Human Rights – stay awake at the back of the class). Pretty soon after the bill becomes law, our judges will

begin to establish case law on privacy. Enter prior restraint (which, disappointingly, is not something that libidinous monks are put in to keep them pure). People seeking to defend their privacy against public encroachment are unlikely to wait until after stories about them are printed, to gain redress. The horse of their privacy will long have bolted. So, at first whiff that a story is being prepared, they will want to injunct the organisation concerned from printing it. When (to take the example discussed between Irvine and Hargreaves) Robin Cook realised that he was being photographed at dawn, putting out the rubbish near a flat containing someone who was not his wife, he might have sought an injunction against the *News of the World* preventing publication. It would attempt to prevent the injunction by showing that publication was, in some way, in the public interest.

Those who fear censorship of any kind are tremendously exercised by prior restraint. They see it being deployed to thwart legitimate enquiry, forcing journalists halfway into an investigation to show their hands to the villain being investigated. The vast wrath of Robert Maxwell is always invoked here, to float like a poison cloud above the argument (though Maxwell, of course, achieved exactly the same ends through a bullying use of our absurd libel laws). But the problem is that prior restraint in some form must happen. It is sod-all use having a right to privacy if you can only act once the damage has been done. Like virginity, once privacy has been lost it cannot be regained. That is what our judges are bound to say, and what European judges would also rule. The only real question therefore, is who will do the restraining – the courts or some other body charged with the responsibility?

And it was here that Lord Irvine came up with his little bit of speculation. Might not the Press Complaints Commission, an expert body composed of newspaper editors and industry grandees, take upon itself the role of judging when a story was in the public interest, and when it was not? Could it not, in addition to imposing fines, create some mechanism for prior restraint?

One of Britain's more far-sighted editors quickly seized upon the Lord Chancellor's words. Faced with the choice between a crusty old establishment figure in scarlet ruling on the public interest and the job being done by fellows from the industry, he would far rather have the latter, thank you very much. It would be better for journalism.

Yes, but would it be better for the rest of you? Certainly, judging by recent events, the PCC is – to say the least – an inadequate guarantor of the rights of anyone except the occasional young prince, and the newspaper editors who themselves dominate it. Consider the cases of Piers Morgan, of Jack Straw and – most disgracefully – of the Tory shadow minister whose daughter was "outed" last weekend as a prostitute. All clearly outside the public interest remit, all printed without any reaction from Lord Wakeham, chairman of the PCC. At the same time, marvel at the gentleman's agreement that has led to the absence of any stories – despite their prominence as public figures – about the private lives of newspaper editors and proprietors, some of whose activities make the Borgias look chintzy. If ever there was a prior restraint, this is it.

It may be because I do not know many judges, or because I do know too many proprietors and editors, but if I were you, dear reader, I would want the judges to judge.

A Tory backbencher offers his leader a ladder to climb down



DONALD MACINTYRE
COMMON SENSE
ON THE EURO

From deep in the interstices of the Conservative party, a still small voice of sanity. In theory Tory backbenchers are, by quite a long way, the most insignificant life form, after May 1997, in the Westminster eco-system. Yet by a cruel irony the same election that made them irrelevant delivered a new intake of Tory MPs who made up in quality quite a lot of what they woefully lacked in quantity. More of them than usual had good brains and quite a few had knocked about in proper jobs before going into parliament. One of these, Andrew Tyrie, an economist who had worked for the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and had been an exceedingly bright if spiky adviser to three suc-

cessive Chancellors – Nigel Lawson, John Major and Norman Lamont – has just lit a slow and as yet scarcely perceptible fuse that may yet detonate the controlled explosion needed to avert his party's self-destruction.

The commitment to rule out EMU for two parliaments was always a piece of electoral sadism-masochism. Its purpose was to "lance the boil" of Europe, as William Hague put it, and unite the party. But while it did unite a critical mass of the party – with the important, and still threatening exception of the famous pro-Europeans who gather under the banner of Kenneth Clarke – that was at the expense of its connection with an electorate all too capable of seeing this policy has the peculiar flaw of being neither principled nor pragmatic.

If the party was against it in principle why rule it out for only ten years? If it wanted to wait and see how EMU worked, why fix an arbitrary timetable?

Tyrie's message is contained in a densely argued pamphlet for the European Policy Forum; but it is, in essence, devastatingly simple: that the portentous political arguments both for and against EMU have been grossly overcooked; that so far from being an irreversible sacrifice of sovereignty, it is no more so than others already made in Nato, Europe and the UN by Britain;

that contrary to received wisdom, it is reversible as previous currency unions have been (there would be no "panzers ... rolling through the Channel Tunnel" if Britain decided to withdraw once in); and that it might have economic advantages which couldn't be ignored. Finally, and most importantly, he suggests that the sensible stance would be to wait and see whether EMU can stand the critical test of surviving a recession – a policy, in short, both pragmatic and principled.

But what makes the pamphlet so interesting, more even than what it says, is where it comes from. Kenneth Clarke was similarly warning his party to drop its EMU policy in a *New Statesman* interview this week. But Tyrie's is a new voice. Unlike Clarke he isn't at all part of the left-of-centre, Europhile cadre of the Tory party. He is at best agnostic about whether EMU will be successful. All three of his former bosses – and he was especially close to Lawson – are now anti-EMU. He is probably more of a natural ideological soulmate to Peter Lilley than to Chris Patten. He admits to being, since the collapse of the Berlin wall, "deeply sceptical of the benefits of the EU in its present form to Britain or continental Europe". But he is commendably incapable of understanding why a grown-up political party

should rule out in advance, and before it has to, a decision that might be both good for British prosperity and for its influence on the world. To do so, in his judgement, is not conceivable in the national interest.

But never mind the national interest. There are consequences in what Tyrie is saying for the naked self-interest of his party. If the single currency is a failure, the chances are that even a Labour government won't try to take us into it. But suppose EMU does turn out to be a success early in the next parliament and that Britain is in danger of being left out. Either the Conservative Party has to oppose something the British people may now want. Or it has ignominiously to change its mind – in one of the most opportunist U-turns in modern political history – because it's going well. Wouldn't it be vastly better to follow the example set by ERM by Labour in opposition?

Labour showed that by

being just a few degrees more in favour of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism than the Tory government, it was able to start rebuilding its credentials among the pro-European sections of business and the electorate. Yet when British membership collapsed, it jumped clear of the wreckage and let the Tories take all the blame. All the Tories have to do in order to make a similar each-way bet is to stay a few degrees more sceptical than Labour. If British membership is that it was. My guess is that it wasn't, and that the ground on which Tyrie is standing is rather more fertile than it now looks. Hague was reacquired after the party conference by the leading figures of the fundamentalist anti-EMU faction. But there are some surprising – and so far silent – figures in the rather larger group of centre-right MPs, instinctively Euroscopic and opposed to the single currency, who may not be as content with current policy as you might think. These are people who would not throw their political careers away by fighting for withdrawal from a single currency if, and after, a Labour government took us in – and who might yet start to rethink a policy that commits them to opposing EMU throughout the next parliament, even if it is a patent economic success. This does not suggest that the policy will definitely change, though I think it is quite possible. Tyrie has provided Hague with a ladder to escape down. It may be that the militants will keep the Tory leader in their custody. But I suspect that some quite surprising Tory MPs will be seeking copies – under plain cover of course – of this heretical pamphlet in the next few weeks.

Sense on EMU (EPF, 20 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1)

Mandela fits the job description for a hero in the modern world



BOYD TONKIN
THE WRITING OF HISTORY

In the climactic scene of Steven Spielberg's new blockbuster *Amistad*, the grizzled patriarch John Quincy Adams – played with a tear-jerking twinkle by Antony Hopkins – scans the bench of judges in the US Supreme Court. He paces up and down beside the busts of his nation's Founding Fathers, and then points to "the only living hero" in the room. This is Cinque, the West African captive who has led a revolt aboard a Spanish slaving schooner. Would Brian Walden, who has just scorned Nelson Mandela for his feeble use of force in a later struggle against racial tyranny, count Cinque as a hero? Since the film begins with the captives gorily skewering the ship's crew with cutlasses, perhaps the chief rebel of the *Amistad* would live up to Walden's bloodthirsty standards.

Walden argued in his off-the-cuff television lectures that modern values have discredited heroism in the classic mould. Hollywood, as ever, disagrees. Following the movie's golden rule of "make it simple, make it personal", Spielberg transforms the legalistic wrangles of the real *Amistad* case into a sort of cross-cultural romance between two exemplars of courage and nobility: the Yankee lawyer Adams and the African farmer Cinque. Popular art loves heroes as much as it ever did, as anyone driven mad by those endless car ads in which M People cheerfully advise us to search for one inside ourselves will know. And – as Spielberg's previous portrait of Oskar Schindler shows – the concept can embrace an inner battle against doubt and weakness without losing its lustre.

Yet the features of the favoured modern hero have changed, and Walden sounded most anachronistic in his stress on the conflict-seeking boldness of a Lincoln in 1861, a Churchill in 1940 (or he might argue) a Thatcher in 1982. As Mandela's reputation proves, we now admire the courage of

reconciliation more than the courage of confrontation. And, on the forgiveness front, the South African president certainly trumps every contemporary rival. This, after all, is the ex-prisoner who extended a lunch invitation to Percy Yutar, the prosecutor who demanded his death at the Rivonia trial. He even described P W Botha, who licensed the secret service to kill Mandela's comrades, as "a first-class gentleman". Many ANC veterans might have chosen a phrase such as "murdering swine".

Mandela stands at the summit of modern heroism because complex societies grasp that they have, above all, to learn to live with deep internal differences. In contrast to the melting-pot optimism of previous decades, they now agree with the late Isaiah Berlin that deep-dyed cultural divisions will not fade or blur. Shortly before his death, Berlin even modified his lifelong Zionism to accept the case for a Palestinian state. In the generation before Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi had insisted that "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind". We know too well that the alternative can look like Bosnia or (closer to home) Belfast.

Yet the quest for peace still implies that power lies in the hero's magnanimous hands. Walden's scepticism about heroism today also takes its cue from a hundred years of deterministic thought that down-grades individual will. For most of this century, every half-bright schoolchild with an up-to-date teacher has imbibed a sophisticated scorn for the "Great Man" theory of history. But it now places his or her role within the iron cage of early trauma. As the Irish poet George Russell wrote at the dawn of the pop-Freudian era, "In the lost boyhood of Judas/ Jesus was betrayed".

In recent years, bargain-basement psychoanalysis has taken knobs almost as hard as those meted out to vulgar Marxism. Yet just as these two related tides of junk determinism have receded, another has raised up: new-wave Social Darwinism, the latest fad of intellectual fashion-victims. Expect, in the coming years, a slew of specious books that will try to stretch the great movements of human history on the Procrustean bed of Natural Selection.

Yet, just as Walden adds his unscripted half-hours to the conviction that the heroic age is past, the tide of historical thought is on the turn. Plenty of cutting-edge historians now accept that personalities – heroes, villains, fixers or chancers – can mould or change events. The most recent explanations of the outbreak of the British civil war in 1642 find its roots in particular conflicts and decisions of the two or three preceding years. To all but fatalists, Hitler's virtual coup d'état in January 1933 (as Nazi supporters) now looks desperately, tragically avoidable. On the



A man for all cultures: Nelson Mandela has the courage of reconciliation

Glyn Griffiths

home turf of Marxism itself, no serious historian denies that Lenin and Trotsky made an irreplaceable difference to what happened in Russia in 1917. Paradoxically, the transformation of the Bolsheviks from minor sect to ruling élite owed everything to personal initiative and almost nothing to vast subterranean forces. (Marx, of course, expected the Revolution in England first.) Perhaps, at some level, the loved or loathed example of Lady Thatcher during the 1980s has played a role in re-instating will and choice to British historical writing.

Still, if it's ruthlessness that Walden seeks, he missed the finest living candidate. General Vo Nguyen Giap first helped drive the Japanese from Vietnam, then trounced the French. Then, in charge of the Viet Cong, he saw off the United States. If strategic genius, utter determination and a willingness to shed the blood of countless thousands define heroism, Giap's your man. Yet Vietnam's tormented history brings to mind the close of *Galileo*, by the deeply unheroic Bertolt Brecht. "Unhappy the land that has no heroes," laments the broken scientist's assistant. "No," replies Galileo. "Unhappy the land that has a need for heroes."

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FIT THE BEST

British Gas may launch telephone challenge to BT

British Gas is considering launching an onslaught on the telephone market, a move which would represent a direct challenge to British Telecom. Chris Godsmark, Business Correspondent, reports on the latest evidence of the cut-throat competition between the privatised utilities.

Industry watchers see such developments as defensive moves by former monopolies eager to protect their existing customer base. In recent months British Gas has expanded the range of products offered to its customers, with trials of home insurance, bill protection insurance and the likelihood of an imminent move into the home security business.

British Gas has also proved more aggressive than expected in defending its share of the gas market, with controversial selective price cuts offered to

loyal customers in some regions open to domestic competition. So far it has so far lost 934,000 customers, around 21 per cent of homes in competitive areas.

Centrica will also sell electricity when the retail market opens to competition later this year.

Interest in the phones market has been boosted by recently agreed changes due in 2000 to shake up the UK's system of telecoms' competition. The Government last year signed up to a European Union directive which would see Britain move to a so-called "equal access"

regime similar to that in the US, making it simpler for homes to switch from BT.

The present system, known as indirect access, means existing BT customers have to dial three-digit codes to make long-distance calls with other operators, such as Cable & Wireless or AT&T. The new regime would make it easier for established brands, such as British Gas or Virgin, to offer phone services, probably by renting capacity off an established long-distance network.

The arrangement could probably see high street brands team up with some of the newer phone networks such as Energe. It would combine the phone company's infrastructure with the marketing knowledge and billing infrastructure of groups such as British Gas.

The explosion in phone competition in recent years has seen the wholesale cost of phone capacity drop steeply, with some 200 companies now licensed by Ofcom, the watchdog, to offer telecoms services.

Yesterday one of the newest operators, Fibrenet, revealed it had completed its UK network ahead of schedule at a cost of just £7m. The network is used for high speed data traffic for companies and is rented out to other phone operators.

The company, quoted on the Alternative Investment Market, has leased capacity from other operators such as Racal Telecom, which owns the former British Rail Telecom network.

Fibrenet has combined this with its own regional switches providing connections to 35 towns and cities and a smaller network of its own in central London.

Outlook, page 21

Sources close to Centrica, the supply group which owns the British Gas name, said the move was one of a number of options being investigated to extend a brand which is being successfully rehabilitated after years of criticism over customer service.

One possibility was that a service would be launched under the name Goldfish, the brand created to launch Centrica's credit card. Despite initial scepticism, Goldfish has become the UK's fastest growing credit card, amassing 600,000 customers in the space of a year.

Centrica has also been closely monitoring the experience of ScottishPower, which has done more than any other company to expand the multi-utility concept. Spurred on by its takeovers of Manweb, the regional electricity company, and Southern Water, ScottishPower has moved aggressively into other markets including gas and telecoms.

A British Gas spokeswoman said: "We're constantly looking at the market. We haven't ruled it in and we haven't ruled it out."

NatWest offers cheap calls to card users

NatWest, the high street bank, is preparing to raise the stakes in the battle for credit card customers by introducing Visa and Access cards which will allow users to make cheap telephone calls. The cost of the calls will be charged to their cards.

Credit card users can already use their cards to make calls from many payphones. But holders of NatWest cards will be able to make calls from any phone. Moreover, the calls will be roughly 25 per cent cheaper than credit card payphones.

Users will pick up any phone and dial a freephone number, followed by their credit card account number and a PIN number. They can then make as many calls as they like, and the costs will be charged to their credit card.

The bank already offers the

service to firms who issue NatWest cards to their employees for use as corporate credit cards.

Companies are especially keen to make sure that employees on business trips use the cards when making calls because the charges - all of which are handled by the telephone service group World Telecom - dramatically undercut the cost of phoning from a hotel room.

However, NatWest is ready to offer the service to its retail cardholders in an attempt to stop them from switching to rival card companies offering cheaper borrowing rates. The service will first be introduced to the bank's 500,000 Gold Card customers before being extended to users of the remaining 3.5 million NatWest credit cards later this year.

- Peter Thal Larsen

ICI puts suppliers on notice over euro

Imperial Chemical Industries warned suppliers yesterday they would be frozen out of its £5bn-a-year purchasing programme unless they switched to the euro from day one. Meanwhile, a senior European Commissioner warned of the threat posed to business the longer the Government stayed out of the single currency. Michael Harrison reports.

Charles Miller Smith, ICI's chief executive, said the "prejudice would be against" any suppliers who failed to adopt the euro from 1 January, 1999. The group would insist on pricing in euros from suppliers across Europe from day one.

ICI has several thousand European suppliers, several hun-

dred of which are British, while annual sales to countries like France and Germany are about £2.3bn a year.

ICI estimates that switching to the euro will save it £15m a year in treasury costs - about the same as the one-off cost of adapting its computer systems to cope with the single currency. The million-dollar bill will cost it £80m.

Earlier this week Rover, the car group which is now owned by BMW, said it expected all its suppliers to have converted to the euro by next year. Rover purchases £4bn worth of components a year, 85 per cent of which are UK-sourced.

Meanwhile, Yves-Thibault de Silgy, the European Commissioner for Monetary Affairs, warned that failure to join a single currency could deter inward investors and put British companies at a disadvantage to their continental competitors. Speaking in the City last night, he said: "How long will British



Yves-Thibault de Silgy:
Warned of UK disadvantage

companies want to bear the cost and exchange rate risk of non-participation as they do business in other member states? These are costs their competitors in the euro zone will not have."

The strength of sterling knocked £190m off ICI profits last year. The group said it expected exchange rates to remain about the same this year.

Investment column, page 22

Merrill Lynch is the UK's favourite research house, according to a survey published yesterday. But the plaudits comes with a sting in the tail - UK companies are becoming increasingly concerned about the quality of City research. Lea Paterson reports.

Four out of 10 UK companies say City analysts do not understand sales & marketing. One in five believes analysts fail to grasp corporate strategy, management structure or market trends, while 15 per cent said analysts could not even understand their accounts.

UK industry also believes the quality of City research has fallen over the last year, according to a survey of 170 top companies by Consensus Research International (CRI), the market research consultancy.

Some 14 per cent of com-

panies believed there had been a deterioration in the quality of research by analysts on the "sell side" during 1997. And 6 per cent said the quality of analysis by institutions (or "buy side" analysts) had fallen.

Merrill Lynch topped the list of favourite research houses by a clear margin, with SBC Warburg coming a distant second.

There was better news for SBC Warburg, though, elsewhere in the survey. The Swiss-owned bank was voted the UK's favourite corporate fi-

nance adviser in equity markets, just ahead of Cazenove, the winner in both 1996 and 1997. SBC Warburg also has the most corporate finance expertise, according to the survey, with Henry Schroder coming second.

Clive Brand, CRI client services director, said: "This year's survey shows all too clearly how City reputations can be built and lost in a relatively short space of time".

Merrill Lynch was rated just third in the research list in 1996 and Dresdner Kleinwort Benson.

Source: 1997 Annual Broker Survey, Consensus Research International

1996 positions in parentheses

Top securities houses for research 1997

Merrill Lynch

SBC Warburg Dillon Read

UBS Securities

NatWest Markets

HSBC James Capel

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson

BZW Securities

ABN Amro Hoare Govett

Schroders Securities

Charterhouse Tilney

Source: 1997 Annual Broker Survey, Consensus Research International

the UK's favourite research house in last year, dropped to sixth. Panmure Gordon and Henderson Crosthwaite fell out of the research top 10, with Schroders Securities and Chartered Tilney taking their place.

Although both Barclays and NatWest have said that uncertainty over the future of their equity operations hit profits during 1997, the two banks still fared well in the eyes of UK companies.

NatWest Markets, which last year sold its cash equities business to Bankers Trust, came fourth in the research top ten, two positions better than in 1996. BZW Securities, now owned by Credit Suisse First Boston, came seventh.

CRI also surveyed UK attitudes to EMU, and found the sentiment to be "broadly positive". But despite warm feelings towards EMU, many companies are ill-prepared.

Just 1 per cent of companies had specific arrangements already in place, and more than half had yet to begin their preparations in earnest.

Pay deals were now in line with headline inflation after trailing below it for the previous few months.

The average settlement reported by members in the three months to December was 3.6 per cent, up from 3.4 per cent in the three months to November.

The EEF said that although the rise was small, it represented the first signs of an acceleration in pay. David Yeandle, head of employment affairs, said January would be the key month for settlements.

Pay deals were now in line with headline inflation after trailing below it for the previous few months.

Abbey National faces £1bn debt exposure in Asia

Abbey National is understood to be carrying an exposure to South Korea of anywhere between £600m and £1bn, all of it in the form of government bonds. The bank is also thought to have reduced its exposure to South Korea and the Asian region generally by about £1bn in the middle of last year, fearing that a number of Tiger economies were in danger of meltdown.

The bank confirmed yesterday that it held some assets

in South Korea, although a spokeswoman said they represented less than one per cent of its total assets, which stand at £1.23bn.

She added: "These are high quality assets with the majority of them guaranteed by the state. We have not suffered any losses as a result and we do not expect to suffer any in the future but we are monitoring the situation carefully."

The bank later said that all

its exposure to South Korea was in the form of sovereign debt adding that it had no exposure to corporate bonds or any currency exposure since any government bonds bought in the local Korean currency, the won, would have been hedged in dollars or sterling.

Abbey National unwound a number of investments in Asia held in the form of asset backed securities, treasury bills and government bonds last summer.

As a result it managed to reduce its exposure to the region before its economies began to crash last autumn.

The bank has a large treasury operation which controls £6.2bn of assets. There had been speculation in the market that Abbey had investments in Korean corporate bonds, financed through the issue of its own paper. However, the bank insisted that all its bond holdings were sovereign.

Abbey, which reports its results on 26 February, also has some exposure in the inter-bank market in Asia, mainly through loans to Japanese banks.

According to estimates by Salomon Smith Barney, British banks may have total exposure of \$5.8bn (£3.6bn) in Korea and \$4bn in Indonesia. Salomon estimates that HSBC is the most exposed with \$3.4bn of loans to the two countries.

- Michael Harrison

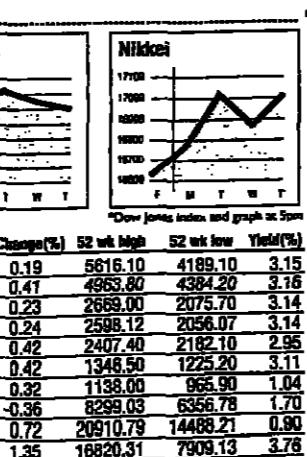
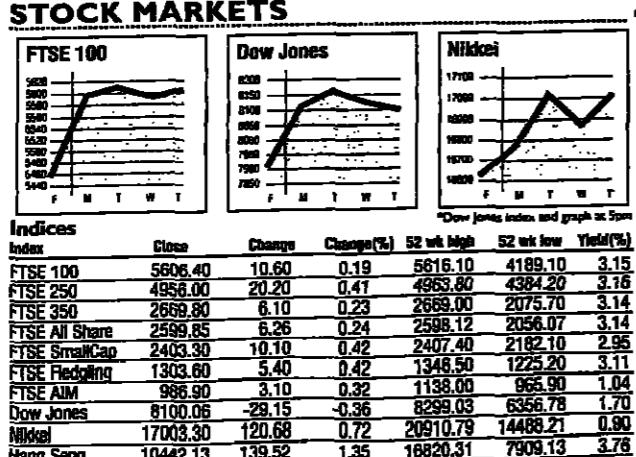
Zacutex would be approved by this spring. However, the trial is unlikely to be completed before the end of the year. Dr Keith McCullagh, British Biotech's chief executive said: "This is disappointing for shareholders who were expecting approval. But this share price fall is based on sentiment. The decision doesn't affect the long term prospects of bringing this drug to the market."

Concerns about delays has caused British Biotech's share price to collapse from a peak of 325.5p through early 1997 to 16.5p. - Andrew Yates

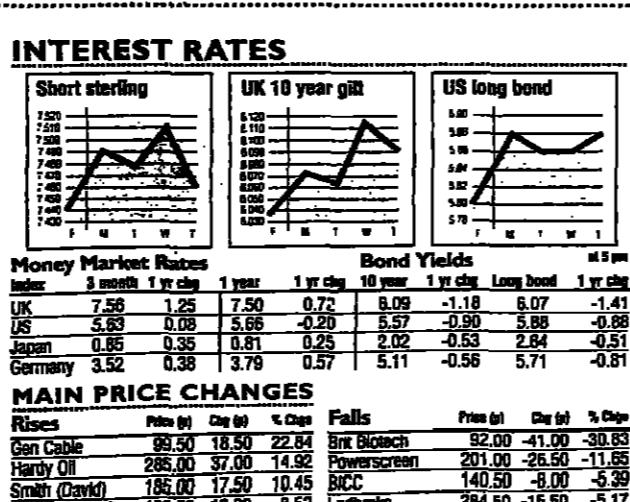
the delay eliminates any chance of British Biotech making a profit for the next few years. But they pointed out that the group's real attraction is marimastat, the potential blockbuster cancer drug. British Biotech confirmed that trials of marimastat were still on track and should be completed by early in 1999.

Analysts were concerned that

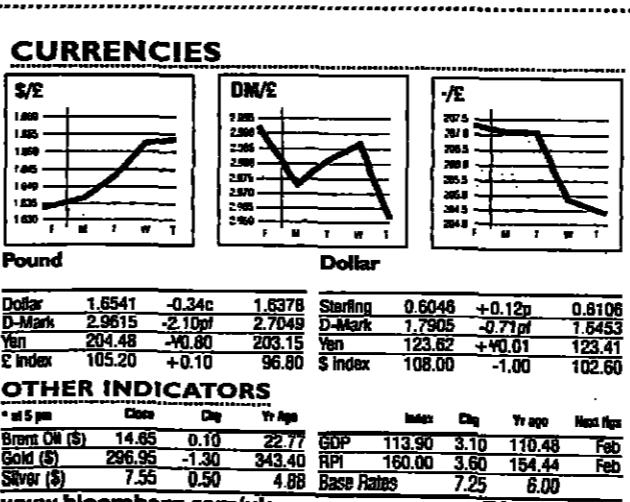
STOCK MARKETS



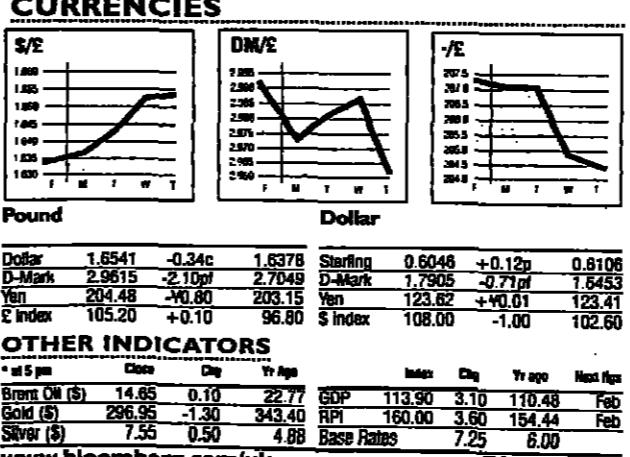
Dow Jones index and graph of 52 week low and high for 1997



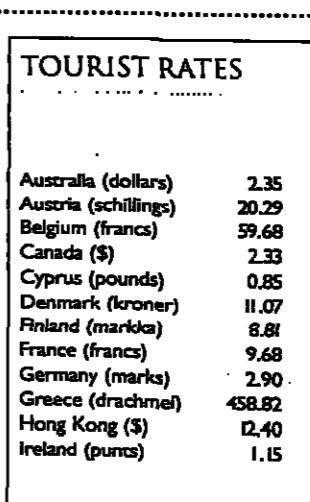
Interest rates



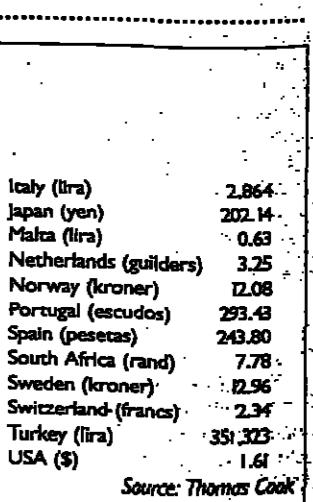
Bond Yields



Stocks



Stocks



Stocks

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling, UK 10 year gilt, US long bond

Interest rates

Interest rates

Interest rates

Interest rates

Interest rates

CURRENCIES

\$/E, DM/E, £/E, Dollar

Currencies

Currencies

Currencies

Currencies

Currencies

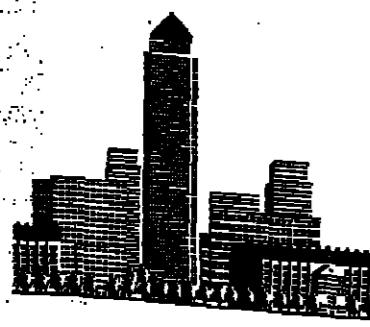
MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises, Falls, Price (\$), Cdg (\$), % Chg

Main price changes

OTHER INDICATORS

الآن من الأصل



OUTLOOK ON A LANDMARK FOR THE UK SOFTWARE GROUP, TELEPHONY PLANS OF BRITISH GAS, AND MONSOON COMING TO MARKET

If you haven't already heard of Misys, it's time to wake up. This is Britain's very own Microsoft. It may not yet be a household name, but its stock market value is £2.8bn, which means that when the committee that decides on these things sits down next month, it's likely that Misys will become the first information technology company to be granted a place in the FTSE 100 index.

True, joining the Footsie is a largely symbolic event. But nothing could more elegantly describe the changing face of the British economy. Misys - a company which is less than two decades old and joined the stock market as a £10m toddler 11 years ago - is now worth more than such stalwarts of British industry as British Steel and Blue Circle. The company that is most likely to drop out of the Footsie to make way for it is Sir Stanley Kalms' Dixons. Misys is no exception; thrusting rival software groups such as Sage, Sema and Logica are only a few steps behind.

So how has Misys done it? The answer is a combination of acquisitions and growing demand. One part of its growth was as a consolidator in the banking software market, hoovering up a number of small niche players and selling their products to banks around the world. At the same time, however, it has also had the benefit of expanding markets as banks have rushed to automate every conceivable aspect of their businesses.

Careful management of cash has been a hallmark, a technique Kevin Lomax the chairman, must have learnt at the feet of

his previous employer Lord Hanson. Then there's the following wind of a very generous share price rating. Misys shares now trade on a multiple of 38 times next year's forecast earnings.

Still, let's not get carried away. Viewed from the US, Misys and the rest of the British IT industry are small fry, dwarfed by Microsoft, Intel and a whole raft of companies you've never even heard of. To be a force in the global software industry, Misys is going to have to become many times larger. Even so this is something of a defining moment for the British stock market. At last, an IT company in the FTSE 100.

British Gas lines up for phone wars

Who'd want to be a telephone company? Well quite a lot actually. Despite advances in technology which industry executives say will eventually deliver free or near free voice telephony, there were more than 200 licensed telecom operators in the UK at the last count and rising. Now British Gas wants to add itself to this burgeoning list of competitors.

One way of looking at this is that it must be mad. Discounted telephony is now so common and the market place becoming so competitive that it is a wonder anyone makes money out of it at all any longer. The newspapers have become full of

similar slashed priced offers. Enhanced

competition is only part of the story. New technology should in any case be causing the cost of voice telephony to plummet.

The internet already offers limitless communication for only marginal cost. In the last few years voice communication over the internet has also become possible, though quality is still poor. At the same time, however, the technology used to transmit traffic across conventional networks has advanced to a level which makes it possible to deliver services for a tiny fraction of present costs. This is because of the almost limitless capacity of new networks for simultaneous transmission of voice and data.

The only thing that stops the price falling to virtually nothing immediately is that the world is still largely dominated by national monopolies with big overheads and a huge capital investment to recoup in an ageing infrastructure. As competition begins to bite that will change. These monopolies will have to start cannibalising their own customer base with new low cost telephony to survive.

For the moment there is not much sign of BT's profits suffering from all this. BT seems able to grow its volume which outstrips its fall in market share. But it cannot long remain this. The basic business of transmitting voice and data will eventually become pure, low cost, utility stuff. Because of the ability of modern networks to offer limitless capacity, it may even have to sold at a loss. Telephone companies will make their money not out of the business of sell-

ing conventional telephony but out of value added services, and by persuading other product and service providers to sell their wares via the telephone.

In a curious way, all this helps explain why British Gas should want to enter this cut-throat business. Telephony will become just another string to its multi utility bow, and if the most valuable thing in business is knowledge of the customer, British Gas and its parent, Centrica, will have it in spades. Utility infrastructures and billing systems are set to become mere conduits for the sale of a huge range of other products and services.

concerns. The key worry is the price. At 198p Monsoon has been floated at a premium to the market and at a staggering three and half times sales. This leaves little margin for error. The second concern is Monsoon's margins, which at the gross level are a staggering 62.6 per cent. Not much scope for improvement there.

The final issue is the abandonment of the float in 1996 over the ultimate beneficiaries of a Maltese-registered trust which owned two thirds of the shares. Mr Simon said then that he was not a beneficiary. He later retracted that statement by saying there were certain circumstances under which he might have benefited.

Even though all this is now in the past, he still will not say how the trust was set up, who its beneficiaries were, or how he managed to buy out its interest. This trust has now been unwound and another trust administered on Mr Simon's behalf will control three quarters of the business after it floats. So Mr Simon can legitimately claim he's removed all remaining concerns. But if all this is now irrelevant, why is Mr Simon so reluctant to explain it?

Outside investors will find themselves a powerless minority in a company dominated by a founder entrepreneur. The history of such companies generally doesn't inspire confidence. This is not to denigrate Monsoon, which is a good business, or Mr Simon who created and developed it. It may well be that all these concerns prove groundless and that indeed the stock will soar. Even so there's enough risk there to justify extreme caution.

Misys set to be the first IT company in the FTSE 100

Misys, the fast-growing software group, is set to become the first British information technology company to join the FTSE 100 when the members of the index of leading shares are reviewed next month. Peter Thal Larsen reports on how the City has warmed to the sector.

Shares in Misys have risen strongly in the past two months as investors have responded positively to the creation of a separate IT sector by the Stock Exchange.

Sale ends Sears' shoe empire

1891 John Sears sets up Trueform, making shoes



1953 Charles Clere buys Sears, Freeman, Hardy & Willis (FHW), Saxon, Curless

1957 Establishes British Shoe Corporation (BSC)

1985-87 Sears has 2,500 shops, with 25% of shoe market

1995 CEO Liam Strong decides to dispose of BSC after profits slump

Aug 95 Sears FHW, Trueform and Mansfield to Facia for £16m loss

Feb 96 Sears Saxon and Curless to Facia. Net loss: £30m

July 96 Facia stores return to Sears after going into administration

Aug 96 Sears FHW Puppy to Stylo. Net profit: £3.5m

Aug 97 Sears Saxon to Stylo for net loss of £3m

Aug 97 Sears concessions business to Nine West. Net loss: £2m

Sept 97 Liam Strong quits. David James takes over

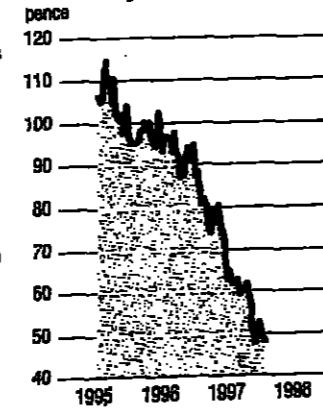
Dec 97 Sears Dolcis to Alexon. Net loss: £13m

Dec 97 Sears Show Express to Philip Green. Net loss: £65m

Dec 97 Sears Shoe City is sold to Brentano. Net loss: £27m

Feb 98 Sears Cable & Co to Nine West for £0.8m profit.

Share price



chief financial officer, said the UK shoe market was a good opportunity. "We are experiencing great success in the UK since we moved in."

Nine West has 1,450 stores worldwide, including 1,100 in the US, and had group sales last year of \$1.8bn (£1.1bn).

Sears will now concentrate on the demerger of its Selfridges and Freemans businesses, which will leave the group with only its womenswear chains such as Wallis. Sears shares rose 0.5p to 46.75p.

- Nigel Cope

than their US counterparts, prompting several groups to bypass the London market entirely and list on Nasdaq.

But Mr Lomax believes the City's aversion to hi-tech companies has eased. "The quality of research is improving and investors are getting better served," he said.

Formed in 1979, Misys' success on the Unlisted Securities Market in March 1987 at a share price of 95p and a market value of less than £10m. Eleven years on, the company is worth 280 times as much and its share price has seen a 26-fold increase.

The company started out selling software for the insurance industry, but most of its

growth has come from banking software. "We noticed that the software industry was very fragmented while the customers we were selling to were very large," said Mr Lomax.

Mr Lomax ascribed Misys' success to sticking closely to its business model and carefully controlling its cash flow, which it has used to fund acquisitions. Since joining the stock market, Misys has done roughly 30 deals, ranging from tiny software operations to last year's £54m acquisition of US healthcare software group Medic.

"Anybody who can grow a company that quickly deserves considerable praise," said industry analyst Richard Holway.

Outlook, this page

German unemployment reaches post-war record

Germany's unemployment rate hit a new post-war record of 12.6 per cent last month, or 4.8 million people, but the increase from 11.8 per cent the previous month was due entirely to a seasonal rise in joblessness in construction. Adjusting for seasonal variations, unemployment fell by 72,000, its first decline for 10 months. However, economists did not see this as the start of an improving trend, and it will do nothing to alleviate the mounting political pressure on the government to take decisive action to cut unemployment. The Bundesbank left German interest rates unchanged yesterday.

Asian miracle 'not over'

A high-level meeting in London of officials from Asian and European countries ended yesterday with a fairly optimistic assessment of the fall-out from Asia's financial crisis. The concluding statement from the two-day meeting, preparing for the Asian and European heads of government summit in April, said the impact on Asia itself would be "material but manageable." Taking a longer-term view, according to Nigel Wicks, the senior Treasury official chairing the meeting, the Asian miracle had not ended.

Far East crisis hits Bass

Bass, the leisure giant, said that the economic crisis in the Far East had taken its toll on its hotel business. Revenues per available room fell 12 per cent in Asia in the first 16 weeks of its financial year. Sir Ian Prosser, the chairman, said fewer people were travelling within Asia. Bass said the group as a whole had traded in line with expectations. Bass shares closed down 2p at 942p.

KPMG merger inquiry

The planned \$15bn merger between the Big Six accounting and management consulting firms KPMG and Ernst & Young is to be subjected to a full investigation under the European Union's merger regulations. Both firms said they had expected the announcement, but were confident that the European Commission's stage-two inquiry would demonstrate that the deal to create the world's largest professional services firm should be allowed to go ahead. The Commission announced its investigation into the proposed merger between two other Big Six firms, Coopers & Lybrand and Price Waterhouse, last month.

Names fight NU on homes

Two hundred Lloyd's names will today issue a writ against Norwich Union in an effort to stop their homes being repossessed. Norwich Union is seeking to recoup the value of payments it has made to cover underwriting losses for the names. The names had bought policies from NU which allowed them temporarily to put off paying for losses while NU paid them. As security, NU had a charge against their homes. Geoffrey Hall, of the Norwich Union Action Group, will allege that NU concealed information it had about forthcoming losses when it sold the policies, between 1987 and 1992. NU declined to comment.

Monsoon comes to market at second attempt

Monsoon, the women's fashion retailer, has succeeded in its second attempt to float on the stock market. The group's advisers yesterday announced that the institutional placing had been over-subscribed at an offer price of 198p. This values the group at £352m.

There had been concerns that investors would shun the float because of the difficult retail climate and concerns about the group's high margins and growth plans. The group's unsuccessful attempt to come to the market in 1996 was also a concern for some. The float had to be pulled due to concerns

over the ultimate beneficiaries of a Maltese-based trust which owned the bulk of the shares. This time, the group's adviser, NatWest Markets, is said to have assembled a "blue-chip shareholder register".

However, some still expressed concerns over the pricing. "They are floating at three-and-a-half times turnover, which looks quite remarkable," said one senior fund manager who decided not to invest. Another, who also decided not to buy the shares, said: "It's a rag trade company. Fashion wax and wane and companies get it wrong. We weren't enthused by it."

The price gives the shares a forward p/e ratio of about 18. This is a slight discount to the retail sector but a premium to the market. SG Securities said the price left "no margin for error" and claimed a price of 150p would have been more realistic.

The float will net the Monsoon founder Peter Simon a windfall of £88m. Mr Simon and his family will still own 74.6 per cent of the company following the flotation. No new money is being raised.

Deals in the shares are expected to start next Wednesday. - Nigel Cope

Outlook, this page

NEW INVESTMENT RATES

Effective from 6 February 1998

ANNUAL RATES		MONTHLY RATES	
Scarborough 120 & 128 By Post			
£50,000 - £250,000	7.70	6.16	
£25,000 - £49,999.99	7.45	5.92	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	7.20	5.60	
£1,000 - £9,999.99	7.40	5.92	
Scarborough 120 & 128 By Direct			
£50,000 - £250,000	7.45	5.98	
£25,000 - £49,999.99	7.37	5.90	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	7.27	5.82	
£1,000 - £9,999.99	7.17	5.74	
Scarborough 100 & 100 By Post			
£50,000 - £250,000	6.60	5.28	
£25,000 - £49,999.99	6.50	5.20	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	6.45	5.16	
Scarborough 75 & 75 By Post			
£25,000 - £250,000	4.80	3.84	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	4.75	3.80	
£1,000 - £24,999.99	4.70	3.76	
£1,000 - £2,499.99	4.65	3.72	
£1,000 - £249.99	4.60	3.68	
Scarborough 50 & 50 By Post*			
£25,000 - £250,000	7.60	5.68	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	7.50	5.58	
£1,000 - £24,999.99	7.40	5.50	
Scarborough 50 & 50 By Direct*			
£25,000 - £250,000	7.50	5.58	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	7.37	5.40	
£1,000 - £24,999.99	7.27	5.32	
Scarborough Fifty & Fifty By Post*			
£40,000 - £250,000	4.20	3.36	
£25,000 - £39,999.99	4.10	3.28	
£10,000 - £24,999.99	3.65	2.92	
£1,000 - £24,999.99	3.60	2.88	
Scarborough			

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Picture remains unclear for ICI

Imperial Chemical Industries has undergone such a year of transition that its 1997 results are of limited value either as a comparison with previous performance or as a yardstick for how well it may do in the future. Profits before tax and exceptional costs came in at £385 against £603m. This was towards the bottom end of the range but not wildly unexpected given the clobbering ICI took from exchange rates and its soaring interest bill. The strong pound wiped £190m off earnings while the acquisition of Unilever's speciality chemicals business helped debt levels to peak at £6.3bn, increasing the interest charge for the year from £89m to £251m.

The revolving door at 9, Millbank has seen £2.5bn worth of businesses sold off, a further £1.2bn of sales contracted and perhaps another £800m of disposals to come this year as ICI sheds its industrial chemicals image and concentrates on a portfolio of paints, flavourings, fragrances and fine chemicals.

The result is a riot of continuing operations, discontinued operations, continuing operations to be discontinued, exceptions and goodwill write-offs. ICI's decision to squirrel away £440m of the £777m profit it made on disposals last year and use the money as provisions against losses expected on the upcoming sale of Tioxide and explosives means that the picture this year should look a lot clearer.

The combination of the Asian downturn, slowing world growth and unfavourable exchange rates will make for another tough year in 1998. But the good news is that ICI's exposure to the Far East has more than halved to 12 per cent of turnover following the sale of ICI Australia. Meanwhile, the exit from industrial chemicals will reduce currency exposure while the nature of the product range means that ICI manufactures much more of its output in local markets.

The 50 per cent jump in fourth quarter profits showed the contribution from the Unilever acquisition flowing through, particularly National Starch where operating margins are approaching 15 per cent. However, the task will be to achieve double-digit margins in the other businesses. Debt levels this year will fall to £2.6bn and perhaps lower, sharply reducing the in-

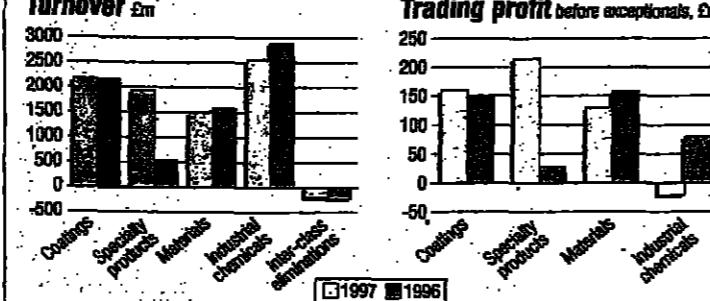
ICI: At a glance

Market value: £8.82bn, share price 978p

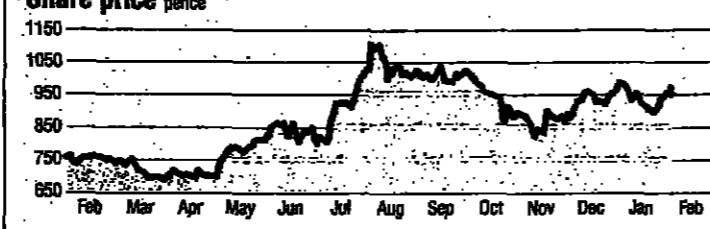
Trading record

	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£bn)	10.27	10.5	11.1
Profit before tax and exceptional costs (£m)	951	603	385
Earnings per share (p)	76.7	48.6	33.0
Dividends per share (p)	30	32	32

Turnover £m



Share price pence



A reminder of the biotech risks

If anybody was in any doubt that investing in biotech shares was as risky as roulette, yesterday's announcement from British Biotech was a timely reminder. Its share tumbled by 41p to 92p on news that the European launch of Zacutex, its treatment for acute pancreatitis, will be delayed for a year.

The news is hardly catastrophic for the group. After all Zacutex is far less important than marimastat, the potentially block-busting cancer drug, which British Biotech is pushing through clinical trials. And the delay

in marketing Zacutex will knock just £8m off analysts' profit forecasts for the year to April 1999, hardly enough to justify the £270m drop in the value of the group yesterday.

But biotech stocks are ruled by sentiment. It is hard to believe that less than two years ago British Biotech was valued at more than £2bn and vying for a place in the FTSE 100. Delays in product launches had a devastating effect on the share price, and the group is now valued at just £607m.

Problems at British Biotech have had a huge knock-on effect. Zacutex would have been the first treatment produced by a biotech company to reach the market and start producing a profit. A successful launch would have buoyed the whole sector, but the delay is a bitter pill to swallow and caused biotech shares to tumble again.

That said, nothing has really changed. If marimastat gets through clinical trials it could generate sales of £1bn; if it doesn't the shares will probably sink without trace. You pay your money and take your chance. As for the

rest of the sector, delays in Zacutex should have no impact on other companies' earnings prospects.

It seems the only sensible way to approach biotech shares is to spread the risks by buying a basket of international stocks.

Hardy's gas find lights the gloom

Hardy Oil & Gas lit up an otherwise gloomy sector yesterday with news of its bumper gas find in Pakistan. Investors, who have been watching share prices fall across the board as a result of the plunging oil price, reacted with predictable enthusiasm, pushing Hardy's share price up 37p, or almost 15 per cent, to 285p.

Is this rise justified? Well, perhaps. Hardy reckons its share of the field, which will fall to about 24 per cent once negotiations with the Pakistani government are completed, adds the equivalent of 40-80 million barrels of oil to its reserves. Even at the bottom end of the range, that's an increase of 24 per cent. Demand for the gas in Pakistan is strong, and long term there's even the possibility – politics permitting – of exporting it to India. Hardy should be able to finance the cost of developing the well without loading up its balance sheet with debt.

But oil exploration companies are valued as much by sentiment as by hard analysis. Because Hardy has managed one big find, investors will be more willing to bet on it repeating the trick. The other unanswered question is just how large a field Hardy is sitting on. Until it does more tests, no one will really be sure. But the chances are that the current estimates are conservative.

Of course, there are plenty of risks. The tests may prove to be bogus, while the political sands could always shift against Hardy. But yesterday's share price move only begins to reverse six months of dramatic share price underperformance.

Investors will still remember the example of Cairn Energy, which watched its share price rise almost sevenfold in 1996 on a series of oil discoveries in the same part of the world. The shares remain a punt, but at 285p the downside is probably protected while the potential upside is huge.

Halifax scraps charges for mortgage indemnities

Halifax, the retail bank, yesterday stopped charging customers for a highly controversial form of insurance which protects mortgage lenders from losing

money on repossession – at the expense of their customers. As Andrew Verity reports, it may force its rivals to follow suit.

Halifax now joins Cheltenham & Gloucester and Mortgage Express among the few who do not insist on the insurance.

Mortgage indemnity guarantees (MIGs), which are paid for by the customer but protect only the lender, added up to £1,020 to a mortgage worth £100,000 until yesterday. Now Halifax will charge customers nothing for loans below 90

per cent of the house value.

Financial advisers and consumer groups have become increasingly angry at the sale of MIGs. Lenders typically buy the product from just one insurer.

They also gain commission on its "sale" to the customer.

Alastair Conway, managing director of Clark Conway, an independent financial adviser, said: "Most buyers do not understand what MIGs are and are shocked when they discover the cost. People are also shocked to find they could still be chased for losses many years after losing their homes."

When repossession grew sharply in 1992, lenders frequently lost money as repossessed houses were sold at a loss. The greater risk caused MIG premiums to rise. With the housing market now bouncing back, advisers claim MIG premiums have failed to fall.

Mortgage protection has been

come increasingly controversial both for lenders and the Government.

In a separate development, Liberal Democrat MPs have accused the Government of pushing people on income support into unnecessary mortgage arrears.

The Government last week admitted it based mortgage interest benefit on an interest rate used by the 30 biggest building societies. The Lib Dems said claimants were losing money because most lenders are now charging higher interest rates.

Steven Webb, MP for Northavon, said: "I don't see why there shouldn't be a law saying as soon as official interest rates rise, so does the benefit."

Cable group in £375m deal

Consolidation in the UK cable industry continued yesterday when operator NTL announced an agreed £600m (£375m) takeover bid for Comcast UK, its rival. The companies, which are both quoted on the Nasdaq stock market, have been left out of recent merger activity.

The deal casts doubt on the ongoing negotiations between NTL and TeleWest, the UK's second largest cable operator. Talks have been continuing since last August, and are widely thought to have stalled.

TeleWest and Comcast operate in two cable franchises, Cable London and Birmingham Cable. TeleWest pointed out that it has the right to acquire Comcast's interests in those franchises if the company changes hands, and said it was considering its options. However, analysts said TeleWest's heavy debt load would prevent it from paying cash for the stakes.

– Peter Thal Larsen

Texas Utilities claims Energy bid would be in the clear

Texas Utilities, the Dallas power supplier, considering a bid for Energy Group, yesterday pledged that any takeover offer should not meet with opposition from regulators.

Jarrell Gibbs, Texas' deputy chairman, revealed that the group had met with Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, on Monday to put the company's case. A three-way bid battle for Energy Group remains a possibility, after PacifiCorp of the US this week launched a raised £4.06bn offer for the company, which owns Eastern Electricity.

Mr Gibbs said there was no

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Crest Nicholson (F)	353.0m (332.0m)	20.5m (10.0m)	11.75p (4.74p)	3.75p (2.5p)
ICI (F)	11.08m (10.52m)	385.0m (502.0m)	33.0p (45.8p)	32.0p (32.0p)
Photo-Flo Int'l. (F)	94.67m (93.34m)	11.18m (9.05m)	9.57p (7.45p)	2.0p (1.5p)
Polythene Pharm. (F)	528.0m (117.0m)	-0.97m (-1.071m)	-4.9p (-7.0p)	
(F) - Final (I) - Interim				

£10 Conran lunch

The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout January and February for £10

From Monday January 5th until Saturday February 28th, the following establishments are offering readers a two course lunch or early evening supper for just £10 per person.

How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an Independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

A special discount is available on selected items in the Bluebird and Le Pont de la Tour shops on presentation of the token.



MOZZO

QUAGLINO'S

ZINC

BAR•GRILL

BLUE

PRINT

CAFE

The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UU
0171 559 1000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Café The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 378 7031

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm*

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 403 8403

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE
0171 314 4000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglino's 16bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL
0171 930 6767

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Heddon Street, London, W1R 7LF
0171 255 8899

The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm between Monday and Wednesday the offer is extended until 11pm*

The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants

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Talk of a Seagram strike sparks hectic trading for EMI and Allied

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Is Seagram, the Canadian showbiz to spirits giant, building a war-chest for a takeover strike? For a time the stock market displayed intense excitement at the possibility of Seagram action, with its two likely victims, Allied Domecq and EMI, enjoying brief but hectic bouts of trading.

The sale by Seagram of a parcel of Time Warner shares was responsible for rekindling what has become one of the market's perennial takeover yarns.

With many convinced that Seagram must soon produce a takeover strike, the activities of the Canadian group and the ruling Bronfman family are closely monitored. So when Seagram raised more than \$1bn there was an immediate suspicion it was building up its cash reserves.

The creation of Diageo through the merger of Grand Metropolitan and Guinness

has put pressure on Allied to restructure its spirit side, which now looks vulnerable. A deal with Seagram - a merger or trading pact - must appear to be its most obvious route.

There is also the possibility that Seagram, with its own spirits business under similar pressure to Allied, could mount a full bid for the Beefeater gin to Teacher's whisky group.

More likely, however, is a shot at EMI. The Bronfmans have fallen in love with the glamour of the entertainment world and seem more keen to develop their showbiz empire than the humdrum spirits side. With EMI, after poor trading, looking exposed, many observers believe it will be the eventual Seagram target. Its shares, 647.75p in May, spun 6p higher to 472.5p after touching 480p. Allied closed 10p up at 563p after 570p.

Seagram also influenced

Diageo. Its warning that Asian revenue had plunged more than 50 per cent left Diageo off 15.5p to 350.5p.

Other blue chips had a volatile session. Footsie was at one time 79.3 points higher, after dipping into the red with an 18 decline in the final 30 minutes it managed to end with a 10.6 plus at 5,606.4.

It was a case of being better to journey than to arrive. Anticipating a no-change bank rate decision shares, particularly financials, turned on a robust display. By the time the bank rate decision was known they had already lost some of their lustre. New York's failure to cling to an early gain and then a late falls off, thought to be instigated by Merrill Lynch, piled on the pressure.

Among the more violent swings was British Energy which moved between a 50p fall to a 12p gain before ending 14p off at 461p.

Financials had another rip-roaring day with excited talk of corporate action. Halifax jumped 33.5p to 938p and other former building societies made headway. Norwich Union improved 15p to 450p and GRE added 21p to 408p.

Asda, with help from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson stretched 6p higher to 206p. SBC Warburg pushed advertising agencies, with WPP 17p

firm at 268p. GKN, helped by the growing tension with Iraq, was the best-performing blue chip, up 78p to 1,326p; British Aerospace rose 62p to 1,696p. Imperial Chemical Industries, on its figures, improved 39p to 978p. Cable & Wireless dialled a 23.5p gain to 614.5p following its alliance with Nippon Telegraphy Telephone.

Compass, the contract caterer, hardened 35p (after 40p) on the rumour of a bid from Rentokil, firmer at 297.5p.

IT shares were encouraged by a £71m agreed offer for Rolfe & Nolan, which surged 137.5p to 497.5p.

Hardy Oil & Gas jumped 37p to 285p after a "substantial" gas find in Pakistan; Cairn Energy and Tullow Oil were unchanged at 433.5p and 147p as the long silence over their Bangladesh developments continued.

Newcomer Athlone Extrusions, placed at 77.4p, ended

at 97p. Stanford Rook, figures next week, rose 9p to 141.5p. There is vague talk of new drug developments. The shares soared to 635p last year before hopes of a TB treatment breakthrough were dashed.

Ankett Associates, a design group, held at 6.75p as its Spanish joint venture partner lifted its stake to 8.18 per cent, buying 750,000 shares at 6.5p.

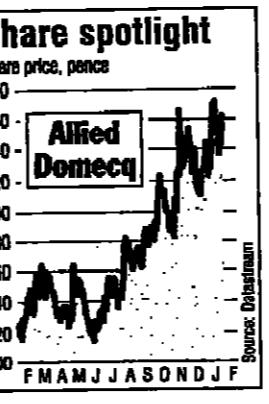
Jumbo, the old Self Sealing Systems, jumped 11p to 35.5p. SSS's shares were quickly pricked, collapsing from a 54p placing to 17.5p. The company then merged with Jumbo in a cash and shares deal. Jumbo supplies hot air balloons for advertising promotions.

MDIS, the computer services company renowned for a series of profit warnings, firmed 4p to 48.5p on the buzz that it is over the worst and its next set of results will be encouraging. In 1994 the shares were 239.25p.

TAKING STOCK

Dana Petroleum, one of the more actively traded operators in the former Soviet Union, is said to be on the verge of winning a production agreement for the Salym field, a large and highly promising development. Three other deals are under negotiation. Graham Stewart of Dana said: "We are feeling pretty bullish." Dana shaded 0.25p to 22p. Assets, according to UBS, are worth 30p a share.

Grosvenor Inns, after its pub and boardroom shake-up, is on the right route and the shares, up 17p to 233.5p, are a buy, believes Credit Lyonnais. Lanting, it sees profits of £1.9m this year and £3.6m next. The company sold 24 pubs to concentrate on its Slug & Lettuce chain. It now has 23 and plans to go to 70. The CLL target is 300p a share.



72 week

High Low Stock

Price Cdg Yld% P/E Ratio

265 220 Peat Free

384.00 0.25 2.5 200

265 220 Peat Free

Asda to offer drive-through meals at stores

Asda is planning to introduce drive-through take-away diners at some of its stores later this year. It will be the first time the concept has been tried by a UK supermarket, though similar ideas exist in the US. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, checks it out.

Asda's "Eat-in-Eat out" concept will offer a range of meals such as Indian, Chinese, Tex-Mex, Pizza and fish and chips that can either be eaten in the stores' dining area or taken away.

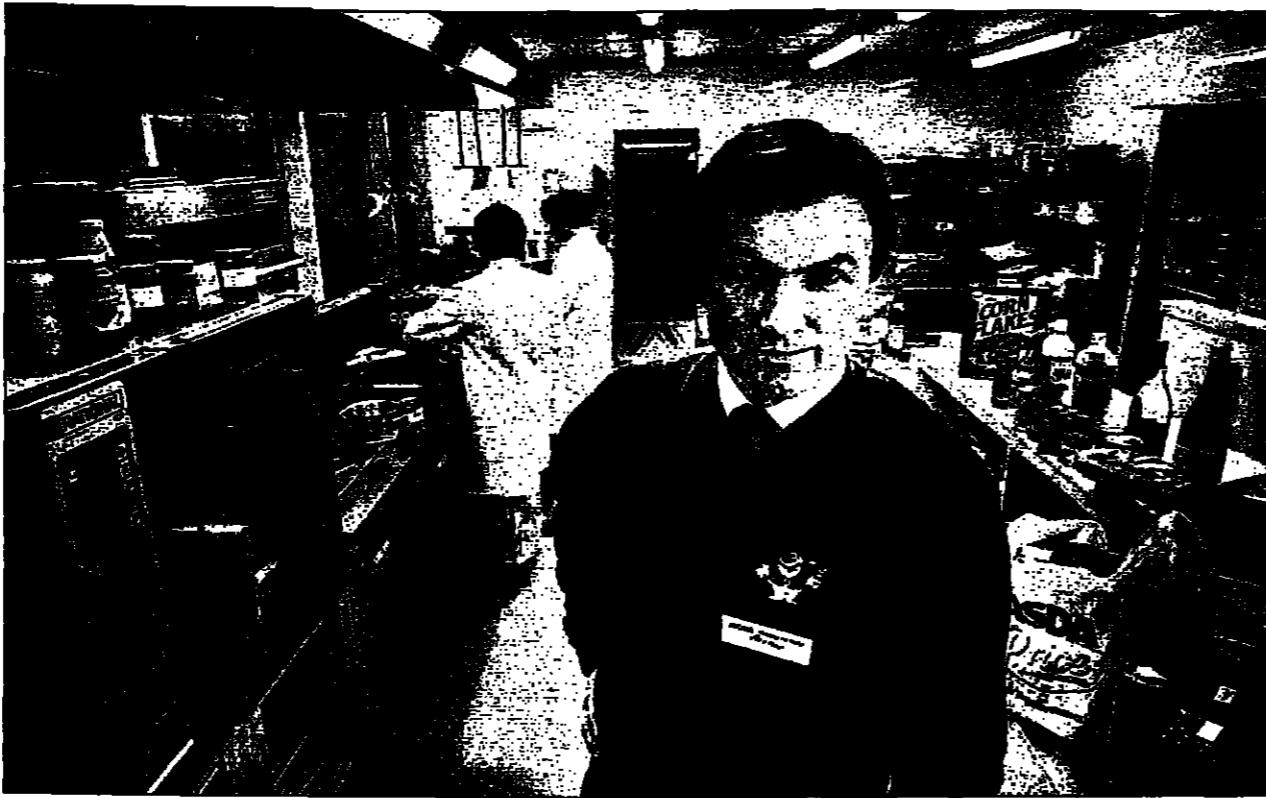
Asda feels that as supermarket opening hours become longer and longer, customers will be increasingly interested in either eating at the supermarket or picking up a meal on the way out.

The idea is already established in the US where a number of supermarkets have been offering "drive-thru" meals for some time.

Asda is planning to introduce the idea at two of its stores later this year. It is thought that one trial will start in a new store in July with another planned in an existing outlet in October.

The company feels it has an advantage over other supermarkets with the idea as its stores are larger and can accommodate a drive-through area.

The plan is part of a series of new initiatives being planned by Asda. It is considering introducing mezzanine levels in some of its stores where it will offer some of its non-food ranges, such as the George label of clothing, and its music and video range.



Asda chairman Archie Norman is considering a range of new initiatives including its own television channel

It would be an innovative move as supermarkets are usually based on just one level. The company is also interested in launching its own television channel. It has held talks with Cable & Wireless and others about the possibility of an Asda channel that would sell its non-food ranges such as clothing, music and video and homewares. The channel could be similar to QVC, the home shopping channel where products are demonstrated on air while viewers ring in and pay by credit card.

Asda has steered clear of electronic media such as the internet so far because it does not feel the technology suits its mass market audience.

However, it feels that the impending launch of digital television later this year will bring interactive media to the masses.

Though the company is unlikely to be an early entrant to the market, it is interested in having a presence there when the new medium has settled down and gained acceptance.

Dairy Crest joint venture trebles in size with £66m acquisition

Yoplait Dairy Crest, the joint venture company of Dairy Crest Group and Yoplait of France, has bought Raines, a family-owned dairy company, for £66.25m in cash. The deal is the first big acquisition made by Dairy Crest since its flotation in August 1996.

Raines is a leading supplier of fresh dairy products, covering yoghurt, cottage and soft cheeses, fresh cream dressings, ice cream and desserts, to

UK retailers. It employs about 1,060 people and made £7m profit in its last full year.

The acquisition trebles the size of YDC and will add a complementary supermarket own-brand dairy produce operation to YDC's existing branded offer.

John Houlihan, Dairy Crest chief executive, said: "This acquisition will further strengthen our progress in building leadership positions in growing added-value markets. Our two

businesses are largely complementary and this acquisition gives Yoplait Dairy Crest the opportunity to take a strong leadership position across the market."

Finance director Ian Laurie said the acquisition would be modestly earnings-enhancing in its first year. "Clearly we expect to grow that profit," he said.

Mr Laurie said Dairy Crest would provide £30m of the £66.25m Raines price tag but

once the joint venture was "geared up" that outlay would be reduced to about £15m.

He stressed that the earnings-enhancing effect of the deal would not come from job losses or rationalisation but through the synergies that existed between YDC's existing business and Raines.

"It gives the combined business a strong position in the large and growing fresh dairy products sector," he said.

The fresh dairy products sector is worth about £1bn and is growing at about 10 per cent a year.

Dairy Crest also announced this morning it had negotiated an extension to YDC. YDC was formed in 1991 between Dairy Crest and Yoplait's parent company, Sodial, and today the two groups agreed to extend the joint venture by 10 years under a rolling 10-year renewal programme.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



The illustrious City name James Capel is to follow Morgan Grenfell into the history books. HSBC Investment Bank is renaming its HSBC James Capel institutional equity broking and research unit HSBC Securities "in an effort to underscore its global brand", the bank said yesterday.

The writing has been on the wall for the name since last year, when HSBC said that as it integrated the equity distribution business with the investment banking business, it would review the use of the separate James Capel trade name.

So who was the original James Capel? In fact the firm was originally founded by two brothers, Phillip and Edmund Antrobus, in 1757, shortly after the launch of the London Stock Exchange. James Capel himself was born in Worcestershire in 1789, and came to London to work as a clerk in the early 1800s. In 1806 he joined what had become Antrobus & Wood, and in 1813 he became a partner. In 1837 he became senior partner, a position he held until his death in 1872.

It's hard to imagine such a career now in a City dominated by spotty teenage scrubbers. James Capel & Co was snapped up by HSBC in 1986 as part of "Big Bang". Mr Capel's name will live on however, with the private client business James Capel Investment Management.

A 53-year-old woman brought chaos to a recent Government land auction in Hong Kong when she successfully bid HK\$890m for a site in Kowloon Bay, only to reveal that she had no money.

According to the *South China Morning Post*, the woman, Wong Yuet-angan, said she represented Li Ka-shing's Hutchison Whampoa group. She had to fight off fierce competition from Sino Land, which opened the bidding at HK\$560m. She entered the fray when the price for the 57,000 sq ft site stood at HK\$620m, up from HK\$500m.

and there followed a 20-minute bidding war between the woman and Sino Land and fellow developer Hong Kong Holdings and K Wah International.

When the big boys dropped out at HK\$890m Ms Wong was left triumphant. This triumph evaporated, however, when she failed to produce the required HK\$890m deposit.

The sale was cancelled and the woman taken to a psychiatric unit. She told police she was Wong Ong, a female Robin Hood-type hero from Hong Kong films of the 1950s.

Hong Kong's land auction procedures have since been modified.

The Annual Broker Survey from Consensus Research International leaves just seven analysts with the top position they held last year, and eight new winners.

The stayers from last year include Richard Coleman of Merrill Lynch in Banks; Robert Donald of Schroders in Building and Construction; James Culverwell of Merrill Lynch in Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare; John Richards of NatWest Markets in Retail; Clive Anderson of Merrill Lynch in Transport; and Laks Athamasiou of UBS in Water.

Roger Moore of ASBC Warburg Dillon Read in Property makes it five in a row. Obviously giving up James Bond was a shrewd move.

Simon Lewis, the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) past president, has written to me saying the search is on for a new IPR director-general to represent the spin doctors of the UK. The IPR is looking for a new director-general to drive forward an ambitious development plan into, and beyond, the 21st century.

Beyond the 21st century? Longevity is a prime need for any candidate, it would seem.

Speaking of spin doctors, Leigh Bruce has left Salomon Brothers after seven years as its chief mouthpiece to take over the same function at Barclays Capital, the new, slimline BZW.

The smooth-talking, moustachioed American replaces the chattery Scot, Peter Baillie, who went off to GKN following the departure of BZW boss Bill Harrison last autumn.

Mr Bruce will see familiar faces at his new Canary Wharf home. He used to work with Naguib Kheraj, Barclays Capital's chief operating officer, when they were at Salomon together.

No doubt Salomon's reputation as a heavyweight bond house helped Mr Bruce's selection. Bob Diamond, Barclays Capital's chief executive, said the bank has "an ambitious new focus on the global debt markets and Leigh has exactly the right combination of skills to help us achieve our objectives and develop the firm's brand around the world".

Leigh certainly has international credentials; at one point he was a correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor in Athens, and has also worked for the BBC French Service and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

Foreign Exchange Rates									
Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar	D-Mark
Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	10000	24454	24482	0.6050	0.6050	0.6050	0.6042	0.6042	0.5390
Australia	10000	20204	20274	14774	14778	14785	14765	14765	14765
Belgium	10000	60820	60847	36385	36380	36380	36380	36380	36380
Canada	12382	23778	23861	14395	14392	14392	14392	14392	14392
Denmark	11275	11244	11175	61621	61621	61621	61621	61621	61621
Finland	10350	14740	14740	54891	54891	54891	54891	54891	54891
France	9885	62411	62802	59390	59390	59390	59390	59390	59390
Germany	25937	25947	25930	17876	17847	17833	17833	17833	17833
Hong Kong	22044	22044	22044	77353	77353	77353	77353	77353	77353
Ireland	10765	17574	17573	14069	14061	14055	14055	14055	14055
Italy	22231	22215	22191	17681	17681	17678	17678	17678	17678
Malta	10400	65465	65465	39250	39250	39250	39250	39250	39250
Mexico	13329	22572	22572	18450	18450	18450	18450	18450	18450
Netherlands	13350	93457	93420	21750	21750	21750	21750	21750	21750
Norway	30224	22288	22273	74463	74463	74463	74463	74463	74463
Portugal	30224	30234	30231	16520	16520	16520	16520	16520	16520
Spain	20173	25031	25031	15152	15152	15152	15152	15152	15152
Sweden	13261	13222	13211	80248	79957	79787	79787	79787	79787
Switzerland	12374	23542	23542	14288	14288	14288	14288	14288	14288
US	16552	23797	23542	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	18532	10000	Oman	0.8371	0.3560
Brazil	18652	13241	Panama	72040	44000
China	10000	23022	Philippines	0.7024	0.4030
Czech Rep	56393	34420	Poland	5.8400	3.5290
Egypt	52265	34012	Qatar	6.0200	3.6408
Ghana	37823	22573	Russia	9.9865	6.0330
Hungary	34028	20555	South Korea	29985	18030
Indonesia	18894	98200	Spain	10.0000	6.2460
Ireland	10000	24454	Sri Lanka	76530	48200
Malta	10000	22044	Turkey	36298	21320
Niger	10000	24454	UAE	6.0794	3.6730

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Prayers and big players as Olympic show hits Nagano

The XVIII Winter Olympics begin tomorrow with wall to wall television coverage guaranteeing huge armchair audiences around the world. Mike Rowbottom reports from Nagano, Japan, on the greatest show in the snow.

There is a new edifice in the grounds of Nagano's ancient Zenkoji Temple – the CBS Television Centre, complete with satellite dish and a huge, roving camera crane.

Pilgrims arriving to worship at the Buddhist shrine in recent days have found film crews from the American TV network attending their devotions. And, on occasions, requesting that those devotions be repeated in order to obtain a better shot.

It is a fitting image for the modern Olympics, where time honoured ideals have to co-exist with commercialism for the Games to be viable.

The last time the Winter Olympics came to Japan – when they were held at Sapporo in 1972 – the event generated \$8.5m (£5.3m) in broadcast rights. This time, the figure is \$513m and CBS's pride of place may not be unrelated to the fact that they are paying \$375m of that figure.

The 1994 winter Olympics in Lillehammer generated the fourth largest TV audience in US history. An estimated 120 million viewers tuned in to watch Nancy Kerrigan skate against a field who included Tonya Harding, whose husband had been implicated in an attack on Kerrigan before the Games.

The 18th winter Olympics hold similar television potential, even if their dramas will lack the vicious edge of the one that was played out in the Hamar Amphitheatre.

Once again, it is the women's figure skating which offers a compelling rivalry and once again the rivals are American – Tara Lipinski and Michelle Kwan.

Last year, at the age of 14, the tiny figure of Lipinski took the US and world titles away from her 17-year-old compatriot.

Lipinski's success has come as a result of developing the most technically demanding routine in the world, involving seven triple jumps. But in terms of artistry, she is not on the same rank as the graceful Kwan.

"About a second after they crowned her, the judges wanted to take it back," one American skating observer commented on Lipinski's World Championship victory.

Last month, Kwan regained her US title with a sublime performance earning a maximum 6.0 for artistry in 15 out of the possible 18 marks. She is the media darling, while Lipinski, whose acrobatics appear to have been scrutinised more critically by the judges this season, has been put on the defensive.

Gooch speeds towards gold before swapping skates for pedals

One of the few chances Great Britain has of a gold medal lies with Nicky Gooch, the speed skater with a bent for bicycles.

Mike Rowbottom caught up with Guildford's blade runner as he warmed up for Nagano.

Nicky Gooch, Britain's leading speed skater, has long-term ambitions to compete at the summer Olympics in cycling. But for now, this 25-year-old from Guildford is seeking further medals on the ice to add to the Olympic 500 metres bronze he won four years ago.

To employ a little cycling terminology, however, returning to



Going downhill: Switzerland's Markus Hermann experiences the piste at Hakuba – venue for the Olympic alpine skiing disciplines – yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

The alpine skiing events are also likely to prove compulsive viewing at the end of the season which has been dominated by the arrival of Hermann Maier.

He has been at the forefront of Austria's domination in World Cup events and is the favourite here for at least three of the five alpine disciplines – the giant slalom, the super-giant slalom and the blue ribbon event of the downhill.

Perhaps wisely, Maier downplayed his prospects in the latter event after finishing third in practice, claiming the course was too flat to favour his high-risk style. Will a course succeed where every rival has so far failed this season? Another dramatic conflict begins to build.

Other innovations at these

The TV ratings will also soar for the ice hockey competition where, for the first time, the elite professionals of the National Hockey League will take part.

The summer Games have their "Dream Team" after bringing the leading US basketball professionals of the NBA into the Olympic fold five years ago. And now the Winter Games have "The Great One" – ice hockey's legendary goal-scorer Wayne Gretzky, who, with 124 of his NHL colleagues, has been given two weeks off to represent his country.

Other innovations at these Olympics include the formal introduction of three new events – women's ice hockey, snowboarding, which is the fastest growing winter

sport, and curling, which is one of the oldest.

The latter represents one of the three main medal opportunities for a team, but the British team of 35, the smallest in number since the 1960 Winter Games at Squaw Valley. The Scottish quartet who form the Great Britain team – James Dryburgh, Dougie Dryburgh, John Napier and Philip Wilson – recently finished third in the European Championships and then registered a victory over the German team who won that title.

While Canada are the favourites for the gold, Britain are among five teams who could fill the other medal places.

The four-man bobsleigh team driven by Corporal Sean Olson, 1st

Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, have a fighting chance of a medal after a highly competitive season in which they have finished fifth in the world rankings, earning two bronze medals in World Cup events.

The other prospect of British success involves the short-track speed skaters, who will be challenging for a medal in the 5,000 metres relay and are also in with a chance of taking an individual medal through Nicky Gooch, who won a bronze in the 500m at the last winter Olympics.

Steven Cousins, Britain's sole representative in the ice skating has prepared himself for an all or nothing effort in his third and, he maintains, last Olympics. Meanwhile, Graham Bell, in the alpine skiing,

and Michael Dixon, in the biathlon, are taking part in their fifth Games.

As the 3,000 athletes from 80 nations congregate in this sprawling industrial town, the big question is whether the road network can cope. Traffic up to the skiing venue at Hakuba was held up for nearly two hours when a media bus collided with a car on the single lane road.

The police have asked the 36,486-strong population to keep their cars off the road at key times and anyone living within two miles of their work is expected to walk there. It remains to be seen whether these calls will be respected by residents who are, understandably, feeling a little grumpy.

All will start to be revealed this weekend.



Nicky Gooch: 'These will be my last Winter Games'

And then there was the disqualification in the 1,000m final, where he was adjudged to have brought down the Canadian Derrick Campbell while overtaking.

"I always seem to do well when I am up against it," he said. "I don't know why. Maybe it's something to do with needing the adrenalin."

FIVE TO FOLLOW

Hermann Maier

Discarded from the Austrian ski programme at 15 because of a knee injury, Maier spent many years as a bricklayer before returning to the sport with the impact of a ton of bricks in 1996. He has spearheaded Austria's domination of the World Cup this season, and has golden prospects in at least three alpine events.

Michelle Kwan

This 17-year-old American skater has a vivacity and talent which leaves many observers swooning. After losing her national and world titles to the acrobatic endeavours of her young compatriot, Tara Lipinski, last year, she regained the US title last month in a fashion which has installed her as favourite for the Olympic gold.

Wayne Gretzky

At 37, this Canadian is a legendary figure in ice hockey. "The Great One", as he is known, has broken 62 scoring records in the National Hockey League, whose professionals will be allowed to contest the Olympics for the first time this year. Gretzky has scored more goals and points than anyone in the history of the game; and he has won everything in the game – except for an Olympic medal.

Deborah Compagnoni

Twice an Olympic champion, she displays the same aggressive approach to skiing as her Italian team-mate Alberto Tomba. Her displays in the giant slalom this season promise another gold. Aged 27, she is a celebrity in Italy and there are rumours that she is to marry the son of the clothing magnate, Luciano Benetton.

Masahiko Harada

Japan's world champion ski jumper has the burden of carrying the home nation's high expectations. At the last Winter Olympics he had only to produce an average performance in his last jump to secure the team gold for Japan, but he mistimed his take-off and landed short.

When to watch the Winter Games

The XVIIIth Winter Olympics begin with the opening ceremony in the early hours of tomorrow morning and end a fortnight on Sunday.

With Japan nine hours ahead of Britain, most of the outdoor events will take place in the early hours of the morning British time. The indoor events will generally start in the afternoon and evening locally. Most

figure skating sessions, for example, start at 7pm (10am British time).

BBC television coverage will generally start around midnight during the first week in order to bring live coverage of the alpine skiing events. However, there will be little late-night live coverage in the second week.

In midweek the BBC will broadcast a one-hour breakfast time programme starting at 7.45, followed by a two-hour lunchtime programme generally beginning at 12.30. Full highlights will usually be broadcast in an evening programme from 19.00-20.30. Coverage will be more extensive at the weekend. Eurosport, meanwhile, will have 24-hour coverage.

Saturday's timetable

(Times in GMT)
Opening ceremony: 0200
Ice hockey: Italy v Kazakhstan 0700; Austria v Slovakia 0700; Germany v Japan 1100; France v Belgium 1100

TV Times
Tonight: BBC2: 1600-1845 Preview (repeated 0005-0030); BBC1: 0155-0400 opening ceremony, Eurosport: 2200-2300
Tomorrow: BBC2: Opening ceremony highlights 0125-0135; Eurosport: 0135-0200

SAILING

Silk Cut in collision

Silk Cut's unhappy Whitbread Round the World Race continued yesterday when she reported hitting an unidentified object five days out from Auckland on the fifth leg to Brazil.

The British boat, skippered by Lawrie Smith, damaged her bow, but was not taking on water.

The setback on the leg

Smith must win to have any chance of the overall prize

as the fleet geared up for the southern ocean and Cape Horn.

● Due to a production error,

the wrong strapline, "Drugs in

sport", appeared in some edi-

tions above yesterday's report

of the Whitbread Round the

World race. We apologise for

this mistake.

Positions, Digest, page 27

It is not the forecast of big

winds that is worrying us on

Merit Cup in the Whitbread

Round the World race at the

moment, but the prospect of a

steady 20 to 30 knots to give fast

running conditions as we turn

left towards Cape Horn. If

anything I am more fearful of

30-knot winds than I am of 50.

With 30 knots we are right

on the margin when carrying

our big spinnakers and when

you are on the margin you can

suffer some pretty scary wipe-

outs. In 50 knots the mainsail

is well reefed down and there

is very little else up.

On the plus side, these are

the conditions in which there

can be some big runs and af-

ter the relatively easy start the

whole fleet will want to get on

with the job of tacking this

southern ocean leg.

At least we can all feel a lit-

te relief that no one has stolen

the march during the tramp

south. The only worry was

seeing Chessie Racing and

Toshiba heading east. That

sort of thing makes a skipper

wonder about his own tactics.

However, we had Silk Cut

and Swedish Match with us, so

obviously some others thought

we were doing the right thing.

As it happens Chessie and

Toshiba came back. The strat-

egy of striking hard south has

been established and the op-

portunity for breaks nullified.

It has been tricky first five

days. We were watching each

other like hawks and you could

be sure that if you made what

looked like a decisive change

in direction then two or three

boats would immediately fol-

low. And for some reason it has

seemed to take longer than nor-

mal to get back into sleeping

and eating patterns. Perhaps it

was because we New Zealanders

had such a busy time at

home in Auckland.

If there is a niggle at all it is

that we have been seeing Lawrie

Smith in Silk Cut showing better

than expected speed in the light

to moderate conditions which

we were doing the right thing.

As it happens Chessie and

Toshiba came back. The strat-

egy of striking hard south has

<p

FOOTBALL

Beckham's thoughts on fame game and Munich add spice to £3.5m boot deal

Dry ice, loud music, strobe lights - they launch West End shows with less fuss. All this for a boot sponsorship, but yesterday the player was David Beckham. Guy Hodgson was there.

You could hear the approach of the full-scale personality and part-time footballer from half

a mile away. The deep, satisfying roar of a Porsche heralded David Beckham's arrival as surely as trumpets used to announce a monarch.

In the 1950s Bobby Charlton would walk into the city for a night out with the other Manchester United players, set apart from the man on the terraces only by their ability. Not now. Can you imagine Ryan Giggs in a bus queue, or Beckham knocking about in a beat-up Escort?

On the day before today's

40th anniversary of the Munich air crash, Beckham was on display to announce a seven-year deal with Adidas that will earn him £3.5m. At 22, in the space of six years he has gone from cleaning Bryan Robson's footwear to filling his boots by the simple expedient of being talented in them. Duncan Edwards thought he had made it when the club started supplying studs.

You read so many things about Beckham that when you hear him speak it is a surprise.

Quiet, embarrassed even, he was anything but flash. Soberly he addressed his image, his temper and Munich.

Even he is shocked at the rocket, party-Posh Spice powered, rise from the nervous debut against Leeds in April 1995 to becoming one of the most famous people in the country. "I didn't expect it to come so quickly," he said. "It's been hard to keep up with."

"There's been a few articles in the papers that say I've got

too big for my boots but people who know me say I'm just the same. Things have changed in my life but I haven't - too many people would knock me down if I did. The criticism hurts sometimes and I worry about the effect on my family."

Which would be fine except that Beckham has the habit of courting publicity as well as one of Britain's most desirable women. His celebration at Chelsea recently, hands behind ears directed at supporters who

barracked him, was not designed to win friends and neither are the occasional on-field flashes of temper.

"There's a picture in a magazine of the abuse I was getting from the Chelsea fans when I was taking a corner there," he countered by reference to the provocation he faces each week.

"It doesn't bother me, but when I celebrate I don't think I've done anything wrong. I haven't stuck two fingers up to anything."

As for his short fuse he says

both his club manager, Alex Ferguson, and the England coach, Glenn Hoddle, have spoken to him and are satisfied he is handling things better. "I do it because I'm so hyped up for the game. I love football and I love winning and when things aren't going right I get annoyed. I can't help it," he said.

Perhaps Beckham would be more restrained if he did not play for the club he supported as a boy. He understands the split emotions this weekend as

United both commemorate and celebrate the lives of the eight players who died in Munich 40 years ago with a service of remembrance today and a minute's silence before tomorrow's match against Bolton.

"Saturday will be a great day and a sad day," Beckham, a member of the last generation of United players to meet Sir Matt Busby, said, "and hopefully we'll perform in the way the Busby Babes would have done, get the result in style."

BOXING

King ready to fight Tyson's freedom bid

Mike Tyson has made it clear that he intends to end his professional relationship with Don King - a move that King is certain to oppose. Matt Tench reports.

On the day that Mike Tyson was due to announce his involvement in a professional wrestling promotion it became clear that he was about to embark on what may prove the trickiest fight of his career: to free himself from the clutches of Don King.

Tyson made his intentions known in a statement released by Jerry Wald, a Los Angeles music entrepreneur. In it Tyson said: "I have taken control of my own affairs, both personal and business. I have hired new attorneys and accountants who report directly to me. I have formed Mike Tyson Enterprises and I am in the process of moving forward with my life."

Ghanem's statement gave credence to the view that Tyson might jeopardise his chances of regaining his licence by ditching King. The outcome of any hearing about the licence "depends on Mike Tyson's behaviour and what he does inside and outside the ring," Ghanem said.

Ghanem said he was also concerned about reports that Tyson may owe as much as \$7m (£4.3m) in taxes. "Anytime somebody has a tax problem, usually the IRS would put a lien on his purse before he gets in the ring. That would be an issue. We don't like to get involved in that," Ghanem said.

"It wouldn't surprise me if the \$7m is accurate," a anonymous source close to the parties told the American news agency Associated Press. The source added: "He can't just walk away from a contract. Mike is just frustrated right now because he can't fight."

Tyson was widely reported to have assaulted King outside a Los Angeles hotel last weekend, but so far all King's public utterances about Tyson have been extremely conciliatory. "I love Mike Tyson and he knows it," King said in a statement earlier this week.

Tyson has earned an estimated \$140m in six fights as he was released from an Indiana prison in 1995 after serving time on rape charges. The New York Post claims that that Tyson is down to \$150,000 in liquid assets.

SPORTING DIGEST

Athletics
Janie Whinck has broken her own British pole vault record at a meeting in Erfurt, East Germany. She cleared 4.15m, moving her into British record book as the year and beat her previous best of 4.20m.

Baseball
Oakland's Cuban-born outfielder and designated hitter Jose Canseco has agreed a one-year contract with Toronto Blue Jays.

Basketball
WEDNESDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Uni-ball Trophy semi-final first leg: Sheffield Sharks 103 Greater London Leopards 82. Butherford League: Birmingham 103, Hartlepool 92.

Football
The Coventry defender Marcus Hall and the QPR pair, Rangers mid-fielder Paul Murray have added to the England B squad for Tuesday's friendly against Chile B at West Bromwich.

The Scottish Football Association has arranged S internationals against Wales B at Broadwood Park, Cumbernauld, on 24 March, Edinburgh on 21 April.

It has been agreed Under-21 internationals against Denmark at Fortibank Stadium, Stirling, on 24 March and Finland at Stark's Park, Kirkcaldy, on 21 April.

LOAN TRANSFER: Julian Watts (defender) Leicester to Huddersfield.

Rugby Union

A: INTERNATIONAL: France v England (2nd leg) 10/2; Ireland v Scotland (2nd leg) 10/2; Scotland v France (2nd leg) 10/2; UNDER-21 INTERNATIONALS: France v England (1st leg) 10/2; Scotland v Ireland (1st leg) 10/2; GLOUCESTER CUP: Group A: Gloucester v Wakefield (7/25); Northampton v West Hartlepool (7/25);

Rugby League

FRIENDLY MATCH: Sheffield Eagles v London Broncos (7/20).

Cricket

SECOND TEST (Second day of three): India v England (cricket start) 10/2; Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

SECOND TEST (First day of three): Sri Lanka v England (A team start) 10/2.

Basketball

SUPERBEE LEAGUE: Sheffield Sharks v Derby (start) 7/20.

Other sports

BRITISH BIRDS: British Grand Slam (Portsmouth).

SNOKER: Benson & Hedges Masters (Wembley Conference Centre).

RUGBY UNION: FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP



England players show dogged determination in getting rid of an intruder at training at Buc yesterday. Photograph: PA

Rodber and Dawson have to pull out

Tim Rodber and Matt Dawson, two of England's potential replacements for tomorrow's Five Nations' Championship confrontation with France, were forced to withdraw from the squad yesterday.

Chris Hewett reports on a bizarre outbreak of stresses and strains among the bit-part extras.

Clive Woodward described it as a "gentle, walk-through session", but by the time England's finely-tuned band of rugby thoroughbreds returned to their Versailles base to be fed, watered and pampered in preparation for tomorrow's big game, two of them had cried off injured. God only knows what would have happened had the coach given his players a real work-out yesterday.

Matt Dawson, the reserve scrum-half, managed to pick up some shoulder damage during

the half-paced amble on an all-weather football pitch at Buc, a few miles outside the capital. Tim Rodber, his Northampton clubmate, did not even get that far. He warmed up by stretching his hamstrings and promptly stretched one of them a touch too far.

All of which left a bemused Woodward with seven fit replacements - the number he is allowed under new International Board regulations. Under normal circumstances, he would have been forced to call up a new scrum-half, either from the England A squad in Tours or from one of the Premiership clubs back home in Blighty.

However, the versatility of Austin Healey, England's left wing, gives Woodward automatic cover should anything untoward happen to Kieran Bracken during tomorrow's hostilities.

As things stand, England will have two backs and five forwards on the bench, but they can get away with such an imbalance because the admirable Matt Perry covers every position from outside-half to full-back. Woodward will have an entire reserve front row at his disposal along

with a specialist lock and a No 8 in Danny Grewcock and Tony Diprose respectively.

"The use of substitutes is becoming an increasingly important tactical aspect of international rugby," said Woodward, who may be tempted to introduce Graham Rowntree, Dorian West and Phil Vickery en bloc if things go wrong in the front row. Even so, he would have preferred to have kept both Dawson and Rodber up his sleeve. Both men played in the two winning Lions Tests against the Springboks last summer and Rodber, in particular, has the clout to punch his weight in a rough game.

Despite the French selectors' willingness to gamble with a lighter, more fluid pack, England expect tomorrow's match to be physical in the extreme.

"It will be hard up front and our discipline will be a key area, especially amongst the tight five of the scrum," said John Mitchell, whose quiet authority has proved so valuable to Woodward in the first six months of his stewardship. "I'm pretty nervous, to be honest. More nervous than I was before any of the big games before Christmas."

Not as nervous, though, as the ground staff at the frost-bound Stade de France. After a week of public berating, embarrassing headlines and almost terminal confusion, they were awaiting the removal of the pitch covers at first light this morning in a state of advanced trepidation. As darkness fell last night, however, the omens were reassuring.

Nigel Felton, the Somerset and Northants cricketer turned pitch specialist called in to help save the game from postponement, reported yesterday that his emergency measures had resulted in a thaw across two-thirds of the playing area and he was virtually certain that the showpiece occasion - the first rugby international played at the new stadium - would go ahead without further hassle.

● Moseley, who went into financial administration last Friday, made 12 of their full-time professionals redundant yesterday, including the Canadian international, Al Charron. The club lost an estimated £500,000 last season and a further £400,000 in the six months up to Christmas.

Walsall were yesterday anxiously awaiting news of their French striker, Roger Boli, after reports suggested he had walked out on the Second Division club, and was in France training with one of his former clubs, Lens.

Francis Jeffers, the 17-year-old Everton striker who has been hailed as the next Michael Owen, is signing a five-year contract at Goodison worth around £1m. Newcastle United had shown interest in him.

- Alan Nixon

NON-LEAGUE NOTEBOOK

Lymington hope their luck will hold after fourth-round drama

Of the 16 clubs left in the FA Carlsberg Vase, perhaps the luckiest to be involved in today's fifth round are Lymington.

In last month's fourth round the Jarrow Wesses League title-chasers escaped from Essex still in the tournament thanks to a remarkable incident at Braintree Town. In extra time, with the score level at 0-0, the home side's Neil Grice shot home - but the ball went through the back of the net and, despite an admission from the Lymington goalkeeper, Wayne Shaw, that he had been beaten, the goal was disallowed.

Shaw became involved in arguments with Braintree supporters and was sent off for hurling the ball at a spectator. Lymington's 10 men hung on for a replay, which also ended in a drawn-out and amorous circumstances. The Essex side were leading 1-0 with 10 minutes to go when their goalkeeper, Paul Caley, was sent off for a foul.

Trevor Gunn, a defender, went in goal and saved Nigel Mottashed's penalty. He was beaten by another spot-kick from the same player two minutes later, however, after a hotly contested handball verdict from the referee. A second Braintree player, John Bishop, was then dismissed for retali-

THE INDEPENDENT

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ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 4/2/98. The winning numbers: 13, 17, 32, 35, 42, 45. Bonus number: 20.

Total Sales: £30,304,919. Prize Fund: £1,135,213 (45% of ticket sales).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	4	£1,116,238
Match 5 plus bonus ball	33	£4,831
Match 5	540	£1,590
Match 4	28,158	£67
Match 3	505,076	£10
TOTALS	533,621	£1,634,721

Breakage (prices rounded down to nearest £1): £2,492.

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ation for which an extra £250 will be charged. Pubs and inns in areas of Braintree, Colchester, or the Essex coast will be closed.

